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Lebanon

A body delivered to American University of Beirut "could be" that of Colonel William Higgins, according to an AFP report broadcast by Voice of Lebanon.

Israel

"Great tension" prevailed on the eve of the Likud Central Committee convention, Jerusalem television reported. Shamir, in an address broadcast live by Jerusalem radio, said the country's greatest duty is to work for "the preservation, security, and integrity of Eretz Yisra'el;" he also spoke against direct election of the prime minister. Sharon accused left-wing leaders of "drawing nearer to the murderers of our people," in remarks reported by the radio. Both Sharon and Levi spoke for direct election of the prime minister.

Three Lebanese detained last week in southern Lebanon were released to the Red Cross, Jerusalem radio reported, while the chief of staff denied that an "intelligence blunder" was involved, Tel Aviv radio added.

The new ambassador from Moscow arrived and presented his credentials, Jerusalem radio reported.

Iran

"The Islamic Republic now needs a prudent policy more than it needs anything else," Hashemi-Rafsanjani told a Friday prayer gathering in remarks broadcast by Tehran radio. The president also noted Iraq's return of the remains of a former Iranian oil minister, saying that some "vague points regarding his martyrdom" must be clarified, the radio added. KEYHAN reported on the visit to New York by Salman Rushdie.

Iraq

Shiite cleric Abolqasem Kho'i denied a Western report about lack of medical care, INA reported, citing a BABIL article.

Syria

'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam urged the Gulf states not to participate in multilateral Arab-Israeli talks unless "substantial progress" is made in the next round of bilateral negotiations, in remarks to the Gulf newspaper AL-RAYAH and reported by Radio Monte Carlo. The foreign minister spoke about Syrian-French relations following the last-minute postponement of Roland Dumas' visit to Damascus, in remarks to LE MONDE and reported by Radio Monte Carlo.

Libya

Foreign Liaison Secretary al-Bishari was received by several Maghreb heads of state, according to regional radios, most of which noted that Lockerbie was among the topics of discussion. In Brussels, the head of the Libyan diplomatic mission spoke about the "flexible" and "balanced" U.S. Administration, in remarks reported by JANA in English.

Egypt

The country warned Sudan about the establishment of a security agreement between Khartoum and Tehran, specifically stating that Cairo would not accept "any Iranian military presence on Sudanese territory," according to Radio Monte Carlo.

Sudan

"Informed Sudanese sources" cited by Cairo's AL-SHA'B denied that Khartoum has signed a military agreement with Tehran. The Armed Forces controls the situation in southern Darfur, Omdurman radio reported.

Gulf Cooperation Council

GCC foreign ministers concluded talks, KUNA reported, adding that the Kuwaiti foreign minister termed his country's relations with Iran as "good." Gulf-Iranian relations would be discussed by a heads of state summit soon, the foreign minister continued.

Afghanistan

The Council of Ministers ratified official statements on the recognition of Russia and five Central Asian states, according to Kabul radio, which broadcast additional government statements on the move. The president received the Russian vice president, the radio continued.

Pakistan

Islamabad radio reported on the visit by the Russian vice president.

India

The government will recognize the 11 Commonwealth of Independent States countries, according to a statement by the external affairs minister broadcast on Delhi radio.

Bangladesh

Burmese border guards attacked a military camp, killing one soldier, Dhaka radio reported; the country informed the Burmese ambassador of its "serious concern" at the incident, the radio continued.

Arab-Israeli Talks

Lebanese Delegation Chief on Talks With Israel

NC2012183991 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1645 GMT 20 Dec 91

["Proceedings" of interview with Suhayl Shammas, secretary general of the Lebanese Foreign Ministry and head of the Lebanese delegation to the Lebanese-Israeli negotiations, by unidentified correspondents from the NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY in Washington; date not given—recorded]

[Text] [Correspondent] Mr. Secretary General, now that the first stage of Lebanese-Israeli negotiations has ended in Washington after nine days and nine rounds, what is your evaluation of these negotiations so far?

[Shammas] First and foremost, these negotiations were characterized by frankness, since we came here to Washington fortified by a cabinet decision that we consider to be a national decision. I believe that we were also fortified by a national decision expressed through the cabinet decision and backed by the Lebanese people. It is important for us, as a negotiating delegation, to feel that we have the confidence of our nation, and our government, for us to be able to perform the requirements of these negotiations, which were difficult, despite everything said about them.

The most important result of these negotiations is that we clearly and confidently presented the Lebanese stand without any ambiguity, hesitation, or vagueness. This stand can be summarized in that there can be no comprehensive, just, and permanent solution in the region if this solution does not proceed from the implementation of UN Resolution 425, which in turn is based on UN Resolution 426. UN Resolution 426 contains the complete mechanism for the implementation of Resolution 425. Throughout these negotiations we were interpreting, analyzing, and evaluating everything presented to us in view of these two connected and interlinked resolutions. Of course, the Israeli side proposed a viewpoint very different from ours. The important thing is that we now clearly know what the Israeli viewpoint is and how they deal with our demands. This is very important for us and provides us with the opportunity to scrutinize and study the situation to find out through the deductions we reach how serious Israel is about responding to our proposals and the topics under discussion, as well as how serious Israel is about truly realizing the aspired-for peace.

[Correspondent] Reporters and diplomats have observed that the Lebanese delegation was in control of the negotiations with the Israeli delegation. The Lebanese delegation kept on raising Security Council Resolutions 425 and 426. How would you describe the strategy you have pursued in leading the negotiations?

[Shammas] To say that the Lebanese delegation or I, as head of the delegation, was in control of the negotiations may be exaggerated. In view of my position of responsibility as negotiator and head of the delegation, however, I tried within my ability to lead the talks on a course that would determine in advance how to transform or [word indistinct] by the Israeli side to the substance of our position. As I noted in my answer to your previous question, we are here to demand that Security Council Resolution 425 be implemented through the mechanism of Resolution 426. We have displayed our readiness to listen to any proposals by the Israeli side. As a negotiator for the Lebanese party, I was duty-bound to try to get all the Israeli proposals eventually in line with our basic and main position. I frankly say that this was not easy. We are not and have not been conducting a political monologue. We were not holding a dialogue with ourselves, but with a stubborn and tough party that knew what it wanted and had defined its goals. We did not want to enable this party to reach through this conference any outcome that may harm our supreme national interests, which are the basis of our responsibility and the reason for our presence at this conference.

[Correspondent] The Israeli delegation's spokesman mentioned an exchange of telephone numbers between the Arab and Israeli delegations to contact one another prior to the resumption of the negotiations. My question has two parts: First, is this true; and second, how are the delegations going to contact one another from now until the date of the next round of talks?

[Shammas] As a matter of fact, the Lebanese delegation did not ask for these (?numbers) from the Israeli delegation, and consequently, as much as Lebanon is concerned, what Netanyahu said does not apply to Lebanon. In fact, our telephone numbers are the Lebanese Embassy telephone numbers in Washington. They can be found in the telephone directory and in the diplomatic book. Certainly, the instructions we have say that we must not accept any telephone contacts from the Israeli side or any contacts with the Israeli delegation outside the conference hall where direct and bilateral negotiations take place. Any direct contact outside the conference hall is too early and premature. Peace must take steps forward, and afterward we can talk about other issues. I made my answer clear to U.S. television and other information media yesterday after the end of the latest and ninth session with the Israeli delegation. I told the Israeli delegation that any contact with the Lebanese delegation must take place at the next round of talks, and I proposed 7 January as the date to resume talks. We have accepted that the talks resume on 8 January at 1000 in response to the circumstances conveyed by the two Israeli delegation cochairmen. The Lebanese delegation was the only delegation that had to deal with two cochairmen, or the so-called cochairmen in English. During the talks the Israeli cochairmen said that 7 January was not possible for them personally because of other prior commitments. The nature of the talks prompted us to advise them that we had no objection to that but, on the basis of a frank and clear concept, 8 January at 1000, and at the specific venue where the

sessions of this round of talks took place, is the date we believe is useful, and we will be there. If there are other reasons that prevent them from coming [words indistinct] they should notify the United States so that the latter can convey it to us.

[Correspondent] Mr. Secretary General, my penultimate question is on coordination with the Arab delegations. During our presence in Washington we noticed that contacts between you personally and the heads of the Arab delegations did not stop: There were meetings and sessions; once you gave a luncheon for the Syrian delegation, as well as other meetings with other delegations. How would you describe Lebanese-Arab coordination in this round of talks?

[Shamman] The coordination was truly realistic, dominant, and continuous either through constant meetings attended by the head of the delegation with a number of delegation members, or on the level of the heads of delegations. Frank discussions took place without any diversions, and with open hearts and minds. For that very reason, the coordination was effective. I will give you an example. We all agreed to adhere to the principle that Washington is the best and most effective venue for these negotiations. We agreed among ourselves on Washington as the venue and 7 January as the date for the next round. But I have already explained why we, the Lebanese delegation, who discussed with the Israeli delegation for three continuous hours the venue issue, said that if the Israeli side is ready to come to Washington to continue these negotiations, we have no objections to being there on 8 January at 1000, although our initial proposal was for 7 January. This is a stand we discussed with our Arab brothers. Here, I point out that I was in touch not only with the Syrian delegation—of course, the Syrian and Lebanese delegations by nature of the coordination between them met inside the Lebanese Embassy over a fraternal working luncheon. The heads of the delegations came over to the embassy building where we held a lengthy working lunch which resulted in many beneficial points for the participating Arab delegations.

In addition to that, we responded to numerous invitations. The Lebanese charge d'affaires is holding a reception this evening to be attended by the heads and members of the delegations. There is also a dinner banquet given by the Syrian brothers for the delegations. This is a natural occurence.

[Correspondent] Mr. Secretary General, my last question pertains to the repeated meetings with Edward Djerejian, assistant U.S. secretary of state for Middle Eastern affairs. Could you brief us on the meetings with Djerejian?

[Shamman] You know there are some meetings which when discussed, are not in the interest of anyone due to the situation surrounding them. You know through your experiences and close presence with us at this stage that there are some questions I cannot answer, and I have explained why. I can say here, however, that our contacts with the U.S. side are only natural. As head of the Lebanese delegation, it is my duty to keep in touch with the general situation. I must remain in close contact and be informed of developments directly, not through a second channel. This is also natural.

Second, in my capacity as secretary general of the Lebanese Foreign Ministry—this is my permanent title—there are some issues within the framework of bilateral relations which might be discussed. I will not say any more. I believe I have not been miserly with you. You always show understanding toward me. The proof of this is the length of questions and answers.

[Correspondent] Thank you, Mr. Secretary General.

Al-Majali, 'Abd-al-Shafi Hold News Conference

JN2012183991 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 20 Dec 91

["Proceedings" of news conference by Dr. 'Abd-al-Salam al- Majali and Dr. Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi, cochairmen of the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to the Middle East peace conference, with unidentified reporters, organized by the Brookings Institute in Washington "today"—recorded, in English with Arabic subtitles]

[Text] [Al-Majali] No doubt, I must say there was a progress in our couch negotiation, and I think it is negotiation. Anybody who says it was not, I think he is not right, because it was negotiation proper, because the three heads of the delegations were talking and suggesting, in fact exchanging ideas and proposals, and consulting with their delegates. To me I think it's much better than even behind doors, because behind doors nobody knows what's going on. We may shout at each other, but at that couch, I think we were sitting next to each other, not against each other. We were talking with each other, not at each other. And I think this is the best way to deal with negotiations. So, let me assure you that Jordan again came with the full heart, with the full decision and will to negotiate, but let me say this: Jordan cannot negotiate without integrity. Integrity to a human being is a human right, and this should be really respected.

['Abd-al-Shafi] We came. We are coming for peace negotiations, and certainly, we did not want to assume any position that would contradict that spirit. And so, from the beginning, as I say, we did not feel very tense or very hostile in any way to the Israeli delegates, and I just wanted you to know for fact that this is our attitude. Then nobody should claim anything on that score. So, I repeat again the gist of the matter is not at all that we changed our position and we don't want to negotiate. We want for sure to negotiate and to talk substance, but according to the rules that are stipulated in the letter of invitation, now these negotiations, pertaining to the Palestinian-Israeli issues, should be conducted in the Israeli-Palestinian track.

'Abd-al-Shafi on Washington Round of Talks

TA2012140691 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 20 Dec 91 p A2

[Interview with Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi, chief Palestinian negotiator at the Washington talks, by Ori Nir in Washington on 19 December]

[Excerpts] [Nir] Why are you disappointed with the latest round of talks?

['Abd-al-Shafi] Because we argued only about the rules of the game of negotiations and did not reach an understanding on them. We have lost a lot of time, and we are very eager to begin discussing issues of substance. That is why we are disappointed.

[Nir] Do you think it was a waste of time?

['Abd-al-Shafi] Not completely. We needed the opportunity to get to know each other. That is very important for the negotiations. At the same time, there is no doubt it took longer than necessary. [passage omitted]

[Nir] Do you feel you and your colleagues are going home empty-handed? Is that what you will report to the people in the territories?

['Abd-al-Shafi] It is too early to say we are empty-handed. It would not be too difficult to tell the people in the territories that it is too early to judge whether we are returning empty-handed.

[Nir] How will you convince the residents of the territories that it is still worthwhile to go on with the process despite the fact that no substantial progress has been made?

['Abd-al-Shafi] We will tell them the truth. We must be absolutely honest and sincere, and state things as they are. There may be disagreements. It is possible that people will have questions and serious doubts concerning the reliability of the process and its potential results. You can imagine that people will have various reactions to what happened. There are different interpretations of the events, even in our delegation. In general, however, we do not want to reach negative conclusions from this experience, and I believe that, in general, most of us are still committed to the peace process. We certainly will not hesitate to go back and harness ourselves to negotiations.

[Nir] Is it true that there is no person in the Palestinian delegation who is the central authority, the decision-making "boss"?

['Abd-al-Shafi] There is a lot of exaggeration in that claim. I do not say we are always unanimous. We have differences of opinions and attitudes. We hold debates and discussions on those matters, but they are normal. We have no difficulties in reaching consensus on any matter.

[Nir] How deeply was the PLO involved in the decision-making process here?

['Abd-al-Shafi] Generally speaking, the situations is clear: Our mandate stems from the Palestine National Council resolutions, and we are operating within that mandate. We cannot go beyond the those resolutions, and we must observe them very carefully. We are able to hold consultations on any issue on the agenda, and we do hold such consultations with the territories, with the outside, and with the back rooms.

[Nir] You did not feel, therefore, that you did not have enough maneuverability as the head of the Palestinian delegation here?

['Abd-al-Shafi] That is true; I did not feel that.

[Nir] Do you believe that next time you will be able to sit at the table with the Israeli delegation?

['Abd-al-Shafi] The truth is that I do not understand the Israeli logic on the matter of splitting the delegation. That frustrates us. After all, for many years Israel has been asking to hold direct, face to face meetings with the Palestinians. Now they come up with all kinds of reasons and excuses. What is going on here? Yitzhaq Shamir's initiative speaks about direct negotiations with a delegation of Palestinian residents of the territories. Here is a delegation of residents of the territories. What is the problem? Why do you not sit down and talk to us? I honestly do not understand. We are committed to the principle of a symbolic Jordanian presence in the Palestinian delegation, which will discuss Palestinian issues with Israel. I hope we will be able to sit at the table next time. I can tell you that we are very much committed to the process, and we will return to the negotiations with full readiness to discuss substance.

Inter-Arab Affairs

GCC Conference To View Gulf Security Measures

Military Cooperation With Iran Ruled Out

NC2212204591 Paris AFP in English 2037 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] Kuwait City, Dec 22 (AFP)—Gulf Arab states have ruled out military cooperation with Iran but are willing to consult Tehran on the region's security, the Kuwaiti foreign minister said Sunday.

Shaykh al-Salim al-Sabah told reporters on the eve of a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit here that "establishing military cooperation" between the organisation and Iran was out of the question "in the immediate future." Relations would be limited to political consultations on post-war security in the region, he said, adding that Iran's Arab neighbours across the Gulf recognized the country's importance.

During the Iran-Iraq war that raged from 1980 to 1988, Tehran accused the GCC of supporting Baghdad. But

since the August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, ties have warmed between Tehran and the six conservative Gulf monarchies.

Tehran said earlier Sunday that it was prepared to host a joint meeting with the GCC—which groups Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

On the Middle East peace talks, Shaykh al-Salim reaffirmed that the GCC would attend the multilateral phase of the peace process scheduled for next month, "whether they take place in Moscow or elsewhere." Syria has urged Gulf countries to boycott the multilateral negotiations with Israel unless substantial progress was made in bilateral Arab-Israeli talks.

Security Plan To Include Iran

LD2212174691 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1615 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] Kuwait, 22 Dec (KUNA)—KUNA learned today that the 12th Gulf Cooperation Council conference will tomorrow discuss a draft unified security formula for the Gulf region which will include Iran and will be akin to the Damascus Declaration, to which the signatories are the GCC member states in addition to Egypt and Syria.

High-level Gulf sources told KUNA that the GCC Council of Ministers, which concluded its work this evening, has agreed on the need for Iran's political participation in any security arrangements in the region.

The sources expect that the security formula will be announced at the end of the GCC summit conference, which will open here tomorrow and last for three days.

GCC Secretary General 'Abdallah Ya'qub Bisharah stated in a press interview published yesterday that the proposed economic and defense alliance will not give non-Arab Iran a direct role in its postwar security arrangements.

He added that Iran could help in safeguarding the Gulf waters and freedom of navigation there, but "there should be a differentiation between the Gulf waters and the independence and sovereignty of the Gulf countries over the Gulf waters."

Gulf sources have stated that the Council of Ministers agenda included the discussion of the international Middle East peace conference, the Damascus Declaration, and the progress made in this regard. The recommendations will be submitted to the GCC leaders during their meeting in Kuwait tomorrow.

The foreign affairs and finance ministers of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, the Sultanate of Oman, and the United Arab Emirates left Kuwait this evening for their respective countries following the conclusion of the Preparatory Committee's meetings here today.

Ministers Approve Development Program

LD2212145191 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1353 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Excerpts] Kuwait, 22 Dec (KUNA)—KUNA has learned that the joint meeting of the GCC ministers of foreign affairs and finance which took place this morning has approved the draft agreement of a $10 billion program for bolstering development efforts in the Arab countries. [passage omitted]

Kuwaiti Minister of Finance Nasir 'Abdallahal-Rawdan told journalists after the joint meeting that it has been decided to set up a timetable for implementing the remaining provisions of the economic agreement over a period of eight years, starting with this year.

He added that the joint meeting concentrated on the economic issues on its agenda and that the "recommendations will be submitted to the GCC Higher Council tomorrow, with the exception of some of the matters that had been referred to the council's economic and financial cooperation committees." [passage omitted]

Shaykh Salim al-Sabah, deputy Kuwaiti prime minister and foreign minister, will hold a news conference at the Holiday Inn Hotel this evening at which he will talk about the matters discussed during the meeting of the foreign ministers, as well as their meeting with the ministers of finance and economy.

Palestinian Affairs

Continuing Reportage on Washington Talks

'Arafat Blames Deadlock on U.S.

JN2212162991 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1600 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] In a statement to the Tunisian newspaper AL-SABAH, PLO Executive Committee member Mahmud 'Abbas has said that Israel, which at the beginning refused to meet with the Palestinian delegation within the framework of the bilateral negotiations, has now agreed that such a meeting is possible. He said that the Palestinian delegation will resume dialogue with the Israeli delegation most probably in Washington on 7 January.

PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat holds the United States responsible for the deadlock in the Washington Arab-Israeli talks. He accused the Bush administration of preventing the implementation of UN resolutions that demand Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories.

'Arafat, who has been in Beijing, emphasized the need for China's participation in the multilateral negotiations.

'Urayqat Criticizes U.S. Position

JN2212100391 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 22 Dec 91 p 16

[By Wafa' 'Amr]

[Excerpts] Amman—Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, member of the Palestinian delegation, has said that Israel's refusal to negotiate with the Palestinians along a separate track was an attempt to obliterate the Palestinian identity, and to divert the Palestine question from an issue of identity to a technical one, thus peddling the idea of improving living conditions in the Palestinian occupied territories, and transferring authority to Palestinians while maintaining Israeli sovereignty.

Following his return along with the Palestinian delegation from Washington yesterday, Dr. 'Urayqat said that the Palestinians, according to the letter of invitation to the bilateral negotiations they received, were considered an independent side. This means having Jordanians on the Palestinian delegation, and Palestinians on the Jordanian delegation, he explained. [passage omitted]

Accusing the United States, Dr. 'Urayqat said: In Washington, it temporarily abandoned its role as a cosponsor of the peace conference by not intervening in any way to resolve the problem. I do not believe that it will intervene in the near future because it is preoccupied with internal issues, and because of its interest in the Soviet developments.

He added: The United States has complied with the Israeli demand not to intervene in the bilateral negotiations. Thus, Israel attempted, successfully, to torpedo the basis of the U.S. invitation to the negotiations with the aim of marginalizing the Palestinian national identity.

He said that although the U.S. letter of invitation to the negotiations addressed to the Palestinians was different from Camp David—which constitutes a U.S. retreat from the Camp David formula by allowing the Palestinians themselves to negotiate their problem and the Palestine question—the United States showed compliance with the Israeli pressures, and abandoned its role as a cosponsor of the peace conference during the past two weeks the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation spent in Washington.

He said the United States had rejected a Palestinian demand to explain the meaning of "cosponsor of the peace conference." The United States had also refused to give an interpretation of the letter of invitation addressed to the Palestinians.

He noted that during all meetings between members of the Palestinian delegation and U.S. officials, the U.S. side would ask the Palestinian delegation to comply with the Israeli demand which rejects two-track negotiations. He said: As for Israel, it rejects an independent Palestinian delegation, because it seeks to confine the negotiations and their outcome to the framework of the transitional phase, while continuing settlement and confiscation of land. This is because Israel wants to entrench the principle of separating the land from its inhabitants, and continuing settlement and occupation.

Dr. 'Urayqat called for holding an Arab summit before the beginning of the multilateral negotiations to face the Israeli stance with a unified Arab position.

Delegates View Israel's Actions

JN2112203591 Amman Jordan Television Network in English 2000 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] The joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation returned to Amman early this morning after attending the Washington bilateral talks. The delegation returned after the Israeli delegation stalled an agreement on the start of the talks.

Palestinian negotiators urged the United States to step from the sidelines and help move the talks forward.

In a press conference in Amman this afternoon, Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan 'Ashrawi said Israel refuses to give the delegation an identity of its own.

'Ashrawi said the talks were the beginning of a long political battle that requires patience and a strong will.

She said she expected Israeli harassment of the Palestinians to continue.

[Begin 'Ashrawi recording] If there is anything we've learned is that Israel is capable of creating worse and worse conditions, even when we think it has reached rock bottom. But, it can always find more drastic measures to apply.

I don't think that Israel will try to treat the Palestinian delegation in any overtly negative way.

The harassment of the captive Palestinian population, which we know Israel is treating as a hostage to the peace process and to its own ends—this harassment we expect will continue and will escalate. This is a way of manipulating and exploiting its power, its illegal power, over this captive population in order to create hostility and resentment, in order to send the message to the Palestinians that the peace process is very costly, in order to force us to withdraw, and therefore to face the consequences of withdrawal. [end recording]

Palestinian delegate Sa'ib 'Urayqat said Israel's actions in Washington contravened the invitation to the conference. 'Urayqat told the "News at Ten" that Israel tried to shift Palestinian representation from an identity track to a technical one.

[Begin 'Urayqat recording] The letter of invitation specified that the Palestinians will speak for themselves and will represent their interests, and this was different from Camp David, because there it was clearly put that Egypt, Jordan, Israel, and the Palestinians will negotiate over the transitional period. Now Israel came, they wanted to destroy these ground rules. They wanted to sandwich the

Palestinian question into the functional division schemes. And they wanted to turn the Palestinian-Israeli track from an identity track into a technical track, so, undermining the national identity of the Palestinians, and, at the same time, really undermining Jordan's sovereignty. [end recording]

'Ashrawi Discusses Events, Next Round

JN2112170991 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] Dr. Hanan 'Ashrawi, spokeswoman for the Palestinian side of the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, has held a news conference in Amman, during which the proceedings of the Washington bilateral talks were discussed. Dr. 'Ashrawi stressed that Israel's attempts to dominate the talks have failed because the Jordanian, Palestinian, and Arab position was aware of these attempts. She added that the clear view from which the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation proceeded, and the rational commitment shown by the two sides during the talks, were some of the most important characteristics of the joint delegation.

In her press conference, Dr. 'Ashrawi referred to the principles governing the Palestinian position, which emphasizes the importance of the two tracks in the bilateral talks, since this was stressed in the letters of assurances and the letters of invitations extended to the parties.

In an exclusive interview with Jordan Television's political affairs correspondent, Salim 'Ali Dhiyab, Dr. 'Ashrawi spoke about her assessment of the talks.

[Begin recording] ['Ashrawi] They were corridor talks. They did not turn into negotiations on substance, but they mirrored a position that relates to substance.

[Dhiyab] Dr. 'Ashrawi, based on the results of the talks in Washington, what will the features of the next phase be, whether the talks take place in Washington or Moscow?

['Ashrawi] The features of the next phase in Moscow have not been clearly defined, of course. But now we have some time to prepare for the next phase in Washington, and there must be a decisive event [hadath fasil] between the previous, deadlocked talks in Washington and the next phase for these talks to be completed.

[Dhiyab] Although the negotiations is Washington have stumbled, Shamir states that he is satisfied with the outcome;meanwhile, Israel strengthens it grip on the occupied territories. How do you interpret this?

['Ashrawi] Of course he is satisfied because he wanted to impose an Israeli position—not to enter substantive talks—and wanted to impose Israel's will on the Jordanian and Palestinian sides. However, he failed. He is satisfied because the negotiations have not started, and he has stated this before, that he tries to procrastinate, win time, and not enter into negotiations on substance. As for the role of the sponsoring country, he has been able to neutralize it, or put the sponsoring country on the sidelines where it did not intervene in these talks.

[Dhiyab] Is the date of 7 January a fixed date for beginning the negotiations in Washington?

['Ashrawi] Most probably, most probably. [end recording]

'Ashrawi: Multilateral Talks in Moscow 26 Jan

JN2112172691 Amman Radio Jordan in English 1700 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] A Palestinian negotiator said today that the preliminary session for the multilateral talks between the Arabs and Israel would be held in Moscow on January the 26th and the 29th as planned. Spokeswoman Hanan 'Ashrawi, who arrived in Amman from Washington this morning, said at a press conference that the United States' State Department had informed her that Russian President Boris Yeltsin also expected the third stage of the peace process to take place in Moscow at the appointed date.

'Ashrawi said (?partly) Palestinians were confident that United States would play a bigger role in the next round of peace talks. 'Ashrawi says she believes if the dead end continued, the United States would have to play a role, whether directly or indirectly.

She said Palestinians and other Arabs wanted the European Community to help push the peace process forward.

U.S. Urged To Intervene in Peace Process

LD2112222891 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1702 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Station commentary]

[Text] Brothers, one week after negotiations between the joint Jordanian-Palestinian, the Syrian and Lebanese delegations, on the one hand, and the Israeli delegation, on the other, all sides to the Washington negotiations announced that the talks were not over. They also announced that the sessions were adjourned for a three-week period, after which all could return to resume them, although no tangible progress had been made that calls for hope that the ice has been broken and that the next phase, whose venue has not been agreed, will be more successful, unless the peace conference sponsors intercede to end the polemics on formalities and procedure.

The Arabs went to the peace conference in Madrid and Washington to start a peace march, whose essence is achieving peace between themselves and Israel in return for the latter's conceding occupied lands. That was what Egypt had achieved previously when it regained all of its territories in return for the signing of a peace treaty with Israel. Although direct bilateral talks in Washington were aimed at ending the 43-year-old Arab-Israeli conflict, the negotiations have stumbled and the only positive point to have

been achieved by the U.S. Administration is that it got the sides face to face, for the first time, at negotiations.

What should give us cause to ponder, however, is that, during the latest talks, the U.S. Administration distanced itself from intervening in the course of events. It would be naive to think that, in that way, the parties will be able to achieve any progress. Has the U.S. Administration forgotten that President Carter devoted most of his attention to achieving peace between Egypt and Israel and held closed meetings with Egyptian President Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Begin at Camp David for 10 days until he was able, through various means, to remove all the obstacles and to achieve the peace treaty?

Negotiations between the Arabs and Israel need catalysts to activate and stimulate the various elements required for overcoming the sediments of doubts and fears after this decades-long and strenous conflict. We do not underestimate the importance of events in the Soviet Union or the deterioration of the situation in Eastern Europe. But that does not mean that attention to the march begun by the United States should decrease. No one denies that international attention to the Middle East question has declined in the face of what is happening in the Soviet Union. However, the hopes given by Washington to the peoples of the region during U.S. Secretary of State Baker's tour of the region for nine months, will give rise to rejection and despair if the U.S. Administration intends to take the spectator's seat during these negotiations.

The need for U.S. intervention is not in favor of one side to the detriment of another. Rather, it is to encourage and urge the parties to propel the peace process, which will remain stagnant in the absence of such intervention. Arriving at the negotiating table was not easy for the Palestinians, in particular, and for the Arabs, at large. Nor was it easy even for the Israelis.

Washington's abandonment of its responsibilities at this sensitive stage means aborting the peace process and wasting the right opportunity for achieving settlements to the region's questions.

An observer has compared the Washington talks and what is happening in the corridors of the U.S. State Department and in the negotiations hall to a game of Mickey Mouse between the parties. There is not enough seriousness for the launching of negotiations in earnest. Besides, U.S. President Bush's announcement of his disappointment over the lack of progress in the talks is insufficient to get the talks out of the cul de sac. When he says that the United States will continue to play its role of a trustworthy mediator, he should translate his words into deeds. If he does not really intend to intervene directly to break the ice, his role as a trustworthy mediator will lack content.

Whoever thought that the negotiations would run smoothly without direct U.S. intervention entertained an illusion. All attention is tied to Washington to assume its responsibilities not only vis-a-vis the parties to the conflict, but also vis-a-vis world peace. The United States has become the only superpower in control of the fate of all nations. For it to abandon its responsibilities for fear of offending one party or another, loses it the credibility it is trying to establish among the peoples of the region.

Algeria

Bendjedid, Libyan Official Discuss Lockerbie Issue

LD2112202891 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] Today at the Presidency Chadli Bendjedid, president of the Republic, received Ibrahim al-Bishari, special envoy of Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi and secretary of the People's Committee for External Liaison and International Cooperation. The Libyan envoy made a statement to Hassan Benauda after the meeting:

[Begin al-Bishari recording] First, I was honored today to meet President Chadli Bendjedid. I conveyed to him an important message from his brother Colonel al-Qadhdhafi concerning the latest developments in the regrettable Lockerbie aircraft incident and the onslaught against Libya in this connection. I received a reply from him expressing Algeria's stand, which supports Libya and its people because its cause is just and because it wants to find an honorable way out and a peaceful solution.

There was also discussion of some issues which concern the neighboring states, particularly the issue of the so-called Tuareg (?problem). There is a proposal calling on the foreign ministers of the Saharan littoral states—Libya, Algeria, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, and Chad—to hold a meeting shortly which may take place in one of our capitals or the south of Algeria to analyze and discuss this question and find a way out which will enable all sides to obtain their rights while safeguarding the unity and sovereignty of the countries which are concerned with this problem. [end recording]

Egypt

Sources: U.S. Urged To Give Guarantees in Talks

JN2012204391 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 2010 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Mustafa Bakri dispatch from Cairo carried within the "Panorama" program]

[Text] Well-informed diplomatic Egyptian sources have disclosed to our radio that Cairo has asked the U.S. Government to prepare a letter of intent and common guarantees to the delegations participating in the bilateral talks in Washington. The Egyptian request, which was communicated through diplomatic channels before the end of the last round of bilateral talks, stresses the need for the American letter to be addressed—in the same wording—to the Arab parties and Israel so as to remove all obstacles to the negotiations between the Arabs and Israel. During these contacts, Egypt expressed its readiness to participate, together with the United States, in drafting this letter. It also asked that this letter should include several central points, including the following:

Israeli withdrawal from the Golan in exchange for a peace treaty with Syria; and organizing all aspects of other relations.

Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon in exchange for a peace and security treaty with Lebanon; and organizing all aspects of other relations.

Resolving the Palestine question in accordance with a formula, accepted by the Palestinians themselves, in exchange for a peace treaty with the Palestinians; and organizing all aspects of other relations.

Resolving security problems with Jordan in exchange for a peace treaty with the Jordanian Government.

The Egyptian request affirms that each of the four points will be detailed in due course if Israel agrees initially to the formula of the letter of intent and common guarantees.

Press Views U.S. Position on Peace Talks

NC2212095391 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0606 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] Cairo, 22 Dec (MENA)—The newspaper AL-AHRAM today comments on the outcome of the second round of the peace negotiations in Washington. The paper says that the Arab participants in the talks were disappointed not only because they came out of the first round empty-handed but also because they were dealt a double blow. The Arabs were expecting strong U.S. pressure on Israel but what happened was quite different. Secretary of State James Baker left Washington for Moscow to take care of external issues while President George Bush was preoccupied with domestic issues.

The paper says that Israel achieved a major gain during the first round of the bilateral talks, which were held in Washington under U.S. sponsorship. Israel, while steering the talks to a stalemate or worse, won a UN General Assembly resolution rescinding the resolution equating Zionism with racism.

Another Cairo daily, AL-AKHBAR, analyzes the U.S. position on the talks. The paper says that this is not the first time that U.S. President George Bush has expressed his dissatisfaction with the lack of progress in the direct bilateral talks that began in Washington last week. The paper says that expressing dissatisfaction does not absolve the United States from responsibility.

AL-AKHBAR blames Israel for wasting approximately two months without achieving any tangible progress. The issues at hand, the paper says, are crucial because they deal with the heart of the Middle East crisis and must therefore be addressed immediately. Among these issues, the paper notes, is the return of the occupied land to its owners who were uprooted decades ago.

AL-AKHBAR notes that the four months U.S. President Bush asked for before making a decision on the massive loan guarantees that the Israeli Government needs to finance hundreds of new settlements will end in January.

The paper wonders about President Bush's intentions, considering he plans to run for a second presidential term. The paper recalls that Bush announced repeatedly that building settlements obstructs any efforts to establish peace in the Middle East.

AL-AKHBAR expresses fear about Washington becoming a partner to dismantling the peace process—after all the enthusiasm and interest it showed initially—by agreeing to grant the loan guarantees to Israel.

MENA Reports Musa, Baker Meeting

NC2012132791 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1150 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Text] Brussels, 20 Dec (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has met U.S. Secretary of State James Baker in Brussels. The two reviewed Middle East peace efforts and the outcome of Arab-Israeli bilateral talks in Washington. They also discussed the multilateral peace talks due to be held in Moscow in January.

Minister Musa and Secretary Baker exchanged views on how to boost peace efforts, Musa stressing the importance of halting settlement building in occupied Arab territories.

The two also reviewed the current international situation, particularly developments in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

'Amr Musa is due to leave Brussels for Cairo later today.

Mubarak Congratulates New Commonwealth Leaders

NC2212141091 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] President Husni Mubarak has sent congratulatory cables to the presidents of the 11 Soviet republics which constitute the new Commonwealth.

Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has stated that Egypt is closely following developments after Soviet republics decided to establish a Commonwealth of sovereign republics. He added that Egypt is determined to recognize these republics, according to their individual circumstances, and to make the necessary contacts. He said that Egypt hopes the new Commonwealth's republics and their leaders will achieve the stability, prosperity, freedom, and progress they seek.

Former Soviet Embassy Becomes RSFSR Embassy

NC2212142091 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1400 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Excerpt] Cairo, 22 Dec (MENA)—Soviet Charge d'Affaires in Cairo Nikolay Dakhamiru [name as received] visited the Foreign Ministry today and officially notified officials there that the Federal Russian Foreign Ministry is now in charge of all the duties of the Foreign Ministry in what used to be known as the Soviet Union. Dakhamiru explained that the Soviet Embassy in Cairo has now become the Embassy of the Russian Federation. [passage omitted]

Sudan Warned of 'Consequences' of Iranian Ties

JN2212185591 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1700 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Mustafa Bakri dispatch from Cairo]

[Text] Egypt has warned the Sudanese Government against the consequences of any security ties with Iran with effects that could extend to Egypt's southern border. According to informed Egyptian sources, Cairo affirmed that it will not accept any Iranian military presence on Sudanese territory.

Information has already reached the Egyptian capital that an agreement signed by Sudan and Iran during Iranian President Hashemi-Rafsanjani's visit to Khartoum stipulates that about 5,000 Iranian fighters would be stationed in Sudan. However, the information said that the duty of these fighters is to help the Sudanese Army to confront John Garang's rebellion.

Cairo has formed a special team from the relevant organs to monitor the results of Hashemi-Rafsanjani's visit. The official Egyptian press, meanwhile, has launched a strongly worded attack on the Sudanese regime.

Production of New Anti-Minefield Weapon Noted

NC2112175591 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1437 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] Cairo, 21 Dec (MENA)—A MENA military editor has learned that the Arab Industrialization Organization has succeeded in producing a new anti-minefield weapon that detonates unexploded bombs. The necessary tests on this new weapon have succeeded and mass production has started. The idea of this weapon, called "bomb detonating cells", is based on creating deep holes in terrain where bombs are to be detonated. The bombs might be buried in such holes 4 meters deep or left over in minefields. When the destructive cells explode strong vibrations occur which detonate the bombs and mines in the surrounding area. These cells can also be used in building roads or digging in solid or rocky terrain.

Libya

Follow-Up Committee Statement on 'Threats'

LD2012164391 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1145 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Text] Tripoli, 20 al-Kanun [December] (JANA)—The Coordination and Follow-Up Committee of the meeting of the Democratic Revolutionary Arab Dialogue ended its ninth session yesterday in Tripoli. It issued several

resolutions regarding the general framework of the program of Arab moves to confront the U.S. and British threats against the Great Jamahiriyah. The resolutions say, among other things:

1. The situation resulting from the U.S. threats against the Jamahiriyah dictates that all the Arab popular forces should shoulder their historic and pan-Arab responsibilities in confronting these threats and resisting them, and that the first steps in doing so is to call on all the leading parties, organizations, and popular organizations to study the situation and take the appropriate decisions in mobilizing the masses.

2. All the Arab popular forces are called on to take a specific and decisive stand on these threats and to frankly convey this stand through delegations from these forces to all U.S. and British embassies.

3. It is necessary and vital that every organization should lay down a practical program which will specify the required action for mobilizing the Arab masses and public opinion and everything needed for facing any development, such as demonstrations, mass meetings, statements, and all forms of expression which will reply to the aggression and which embodies the pan-Arab will.

4. A pan-Arab media battle should be waged. Good pan-Arab preparation for it should be made in order to expose the falsehood of the U.S. and British claims and accusations against the Jamahiriyah, and to emphasize the Jamahiriyah's stand based on rejection of terrorism and supported by international law and legitimacy.

5. In order to organize the Arab masses movement in every [Arab] country for this pan-Arab battle there is a paramount need to form national committees to support and consolidate the Jamahiriyah in facing up to the U.S.-British threats and their anticipated aggression.

While the Committee salutes the efforts which have so far been exerted by the Union of Arab Lawyers and a number of other Arab organizations it asserts the need to pay more attention to the legal aspects of the issue, a matter which requires the Union of Arab Lawyers and other lawyers syndicates in each Arab country to plead the legal arguments against such accusations and lies.

6. The voice of the Arab masses and their support for the Jamahiriyah in facing up the U.S.-British threats should not only be repeated inside the Arab homeland, rather it should be heard by Western public opinion in order to uncover and expose such accusations and fabrications and in order to point out the dangers which could result from any aggression against the Jamahiriyah, its people and its leadership.

Further on Statements

LD2012170391 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1155 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Text] Tripoli, 20 al-Kanun [December] (JANA)—The Coordination and Follow-Up Committee of the Democratic Revolutionary Arab Dialogue conference issued a statement about the imperialist U.S. and British threats to the people of the Jamahiriyah. Here is the text of the statement:

For several weeks, the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah has been exposed to a new imperialist conspiracy directed by the United States and Britain. Despite the fact that this is not the first conspiracy of its kind, because the Jamahiriyah has been exposed to many conspiracies and direct military aggressions, the current conspiracy has grave dimensions because it is aimed at damaging the reputation of the Jamahiriyah by accusing it of terrorism and attempting to place on its shoulders the responsibility for destroying the Pan Am aircraft over Scotland in 1988. The conspiracy also includes the launching of a wide political and media campaign for mobilizing international public opinion and preparing the international atmosphere for a military and economic aggression against the Jamahiriyah.

We are certain that accusing the Jamahiriyah of shooting down the aircraft, after other countries were accused of that for three years, is aimed against the firm stands adopted by the Jamahiriyah in the face of the new imperialist attack against the Arab homeland.

We are certain that it is also aimed at destroying the political and social options which were adopted by the al-Fatih revolution and for whose deepening and development it has continuously worked.

As they perceive the dangers of this new conspiracy and its dimensions and the real intentions of those plotting it of preparing for a direct aggression against the Jamahiriyah, the Arab parties, organizations, and forces joining under the banner of the Arab Democratic Revolutionary Dialogue, which represents the movement of the Arab liberation forces, emphasize the following stances:

First, strongly denounce the neo-imperialist conspiracy against the Jamahiriyah and those who are carrying it out, and reiterate their condemnation of the imperialist policy of arrogance which is [word indistinct] the notorious colonialist logic and expose the imperialist notion of international legitimacy [words indistinct] an instrument of aggression and blackmail against peoples and their just causes, and confirm what we have always declared: That the new international order, as understood by imperialism, means the spreading of imperialist control, and in particular U.S. control, over the world.

Second, declare clearly and unequivocally their absolute support for the people of the Jamahiriyah under the leadership of the brother Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, and the placing of all their capabilities in defense of the Jamahiriyah and confrontation of the siege and aggression threatening it.

Third, confirm that the conspiracy to which the Jamahiriyah is being exposed is aimed at the Arab nation as a whole, its present and future, because by targetting the Jamahiriyah, imperialism is indeed targetting the firm stands taken by the diligent Arab struggle for Arab unity and in support

of the just cause of the Palestinian people, and all the causes of freedom and progress in the Arab homeland and the world, and because they target through the aggression against the Jamahiriyah the existence, interests, and objectives of the Arab nation, and the confrontation of the attempts at humiliating and subjugating this nation, and preventing it from making progress and occupying its role in our contemporary world.

Fourth, they highly valued the firm, principled and responsible stand, which is also subtle and wise; eager for peace and the respect of national, pan-Arab, and international legality being taken by the Jamahiriyah when dealing with and responding to such a conspiracy by referring the U.S. and British claims to judicial bodies for investigation and inviting neutral international judicial bodies to take part with the aim of setting up an international body of investigation.

Fifth, in accordance with the above the participants in the conference pledge to mobilize their energies to supporting the Jamahiriyah in facing up to the great conspiracy and urge the Arab League, Arab governments, and the vast Arab masses and their political forces to shoulder their pan-Arab and national responsibility by transforming the battle with imperialism and Zionism and their hirelings to a battle of the whole Arab nation.

They furthermore pledge to use their international relations with democratic forces in various countries, particularly in Europe, as well as their relations with information organs therein by channeling to them information and facts which would enable them to face up to the campaign of distortion being carried out by imperialist information organs.

Diplomat on 'Balanced' U.S. Administration

LD2012204191 Tripoli JANA in English 1729 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Text] Brussels, al-Kanoun, December 20, JAMAHARIYA NEWS AGENCY— In a speech made to the Brussels International Agency, the secretary of the Arab Libyan People's Bureau in Brussels confirmed that the Great Jamahariya fully appreciates that President George Bush is a rational man and that the present American Administration is a flexible one.

He added that emanating from the rationality of President Geroge Bush and the present balanced American Administration, Libya asserts its readiness to co-operate within the framework of international legitimacy based on the respect of domestic laws (Libyan) in order to reach a settlement to the Lockerbie affair. He also called on the European Committee to review once again its positions in this case during its next meetings: as we confirm there is a distinction between judicial matters and political affairs.

In respect of the possiblity of inviting Belgian judges to participate in the investigation, he said that the doors are wide open and that we still adhere to the participation of all international law institutions, but we cannot surrender the two Libyan citizens to foreign countries as this is illegal.

On the other hand, he called on the Dutch presidency to exert efforts towards the settlement of the issue through peaceful means, in a civilised way.

In respect of the Portugese presidency of the Community, which will start at the beginning of next month, he said Portugal is a country friendly to Arabs and it is enthusiastic about the promotion of relations with the Arab area generally and the large Arab Maghreb area in particular. Portugal is also a constructive element in political dialogue between the group of countries known as five plus five.

Continued Detention of Lockerbie Suspects Opposed

LD2012202291 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1900 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Text] Tripoli, 20 Dec (JANA)—Malta has reaffirmed in an official communique by its Premier Fenech Adami, as was also officially confirmed by Dr. Guido De Marco, its deputy premier and foreign and justice minister, in another communique, that it is 100 percent certain that no briefcase whatsoever left the Maltese airport of Luqa without a passenger.

No sooner was this issue raised than the Maltese Airways hastened to categorically deny the obvious claims and fabrications and to reaffirm before anyone else that no briefcase left Luqa airport without a passenger. Now, after these Maltese official confirmations at the highest level, since the story of the alleged briefcase leaving Malta without a passenger was the basis of accusations against the Great Jamahiriyah, and since this formed the basis of the so-called memorandum of indictment against Libya, the Maltese official communiques have abrogated that basis, rendering null and void eveything built on it.

Keeping the two Libyan nationals, against whom the accusation has been leveled, in detention by the Libyan examining magistrate following such official evidence by Malta and from the party on which the accusations were initially based is, therefore against human rights and thereby an act of oppression.

According to what logic should we believe the American-British statements and deny the official Maltese statements. Is it because Malta is a small country with a small population? And why should the truth be measured by the number of a population rather than by facts?

So why should the name of Libya be invoked then? And why should not there be a search for the real culprit? The American aircraft did not use Libyan airspace nor did it take off from a Libyan airport. Moreover it did not crash over its territories nor did it have Libyans abroad. Thus, what Libya has been asserting, with conviction since 1988—that it had nothing to do with such a matter—has

been affirmed. Moreover Libya is not afraid of any investigation; it is still committed to an investigation as long as it is a neutral and an honest one free from political aims, colonialist intentions, and electoral considerations which should all be viewed as horse-trading and exploitation of the blood of the innocent victims of the catastrophe, with whom Libya expresses its solidarity in the search for the real culprit.

As far as we are concerned in JANA we believe that to continue investigations with the two Libyans following such an official statement [by Malta] and the latter's categorical denial would be considered as a violation of laws and human rights by the Libyan examining magistrate.

Editor on Abrogation of Zionism Resolution

LD2212203491 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1715 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] Tripoli, 22 Dec (JANA)—The JANA political editor has condemned the cancellation of the resolution describing Zionism as a form of racism, saying: The UN General Assembly has voted for the cancellation of its Resolution Number 3379 of 1975 which describes Zionism as a racist movement. It has thus dealt a new blow to its role and reflected clearly the hegemony of the United States over the United Nations and the fact that the United States is putting the United Nations at the service of its policy of subjugating peoples.

The JANA political editor asserted that it is beyond any doubt that the decision of the UN General Assembly to cancel its 1975 resolution does not mean that the racist character of Zionism has been eliminated or removed. Racism is one of the foundations of the Zionist movement, which is still to this day practicing a horrible racism and blunt racial discrimination against the Palestinian Arab and Lebanese peoples. Thus the abrogation is only theoretical.

The editor pointed out that since the UN General Assembly adopted this stance, the Zionist enemy has increased its racist practices against the Palestinian Arab people. It has started to carry out a scorched earth policy, emptying the land of its people in order to make room for the expansion of the exodus operations and the establishment of colonies, at the expense of the Arab existence.

The political editor went on to say that by praising the cancellation resolution, the U.S. President ignored the terrorist practices that the Zionist enemy has been carrying out ever since its occupation of Palestine, and still is carrying out up to this very moment, against the Palestinian Arab people. Do not such stances confirm once again that the United States cannot stand by the Arab nation? Do they not prove a complete bias toward the Israelis who continue their crimes against Arabs and Muslims? Those crimes which the world still recalls are a form of Zionism and always will be.

The JANA political editor warned that the UN General Assembly's cancellation of this resolution is a grave precedent in the history of the United Nations. It will expose all resolutions supporting the rights of small peoples to cancellation according to the whims and interests of the United States and the great powers, which are working toward imposing their policies on peoples by all possible means. The adoption of this resolution is also a U.S. reward for the Zionist enemy, which is continuing its expansionist policy at the expense of the Arab nation in order to establish a so-called Greater Israel.

The JANA political editor discussed the issue of jihad and the attempt to drop it from international resolutions. He reiterated that jihad is a legitimate issue for the Arab and Muslim citizen, and stems from his being and beliefs. Therefore, international resolutions are meaningless in this regard. He said that the Arab and Islamic masses are not concerned with such resolutions and prove the contrary, for jihad is a duty in occupied Palestine for the sake of protecting Arab and Islamic sanctities, as it is a duty at any time and any place for the liberation of Muslims.

Mauritania

President Holds Talks With Libya's al-Bishari

LD2312031591 Nouakchott ORTM Radio in Arabic 2030 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Excerpts] President Colonel Maaouiya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya, chairman of the Military Committee for National Salvation and head of state, this afternoon received Ibrahim Muhammad al-Bishari, secretary of the Libyan General People's Committee for External Liaison and International Cooperation. [passage omitted]

[Begin al-Bishari recording] I had the honor this morning of meeting His Excellency President Maaouiya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya, to whom I conveyed a message from his brother, al-Qadhdhafi, which concerns first of all Libya's appreciation regarding Mauritania's stands on Libya. Second, I briefed him on the plans that are being prepared these days against the Libyan people. I explained that Libya wants to find peaceful outcomes to avert the occurrence of problems in this region. As usual, his excellency the president promised to exert efforts either within the Maghreb or with the countries concerned to persuade them to search for a peaceful and dignified solution which would not expose the world's security and peace to any danger. [end recording]

Violence Within Taya's Party Delays Campaign

AB1912211691 Libreville Africa No. 1 in French 1830 GMT 19 Dec 91

[Text] In Mauritania, things are getting complicated for the Democratic and Social Republican Party [PRDS], the party that supports President Maaouiya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya, who wants to succeed himself in the 24 January elections next year. The party's campaign has been suspended as a result of the clashes that have

occurred in several cities. This has been a hard blow for the entourage of the Mauritanian head of state, who already has a number of opponents in the context of these elections. From Nouakchott, (Salem Meshboul Salem) reports:

[Begin (Salem) recording] Tribalism and regionalism have been resurfacing strongly in Mauritania. It must be sincerely admitted that they never left the minds of either the Mauritanian people or their leaders since before independence up to the present. The officials of President Maaouiya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya's party have been forced to stop their campaign throughout the larger part of the Republic.

The PRDS is devoured by the sentiment of tribe and money. The consequence is clashes among all the factions, notably tribal ones. Disturbances have been reported everywhere: in Rosso, Boutilimit, Kiffa, the capital of Nouakchott, the economic capital of Nouadhibou, and (Cheggarg-Obrakna), 300 km east of Nouakchott. Here, civilian clashes left one dead and several seriously injured. The wounded were urgently evacuated to the trauma center in Nouakchott.

At the root of this situation is the election of grass-roots committee officials of the PRDS. According to the independent (EL-BEYEN) newspaper, the entire campaign for the reimplementation of the PRDS will not resume until after the presidential elections of 24 January 1992. [end recording]

Morocco

King Hassan Receives Message From al-Qadhdhafi

LD2012203191 Rabat Moroccan Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Text] His Majesty King Hassan II received this afternoon at the Royal Palace in Marrakech Mr. Ibrahim Muhammad al-Bishari, secretary of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah People's Committee for External Liaison and International Cooperation. The latter handed the king a private letter from Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi.

Sudan

Sources Deny Iranian Military Cooperation Reports

NC2112104891 Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 17 Dec 91 pp 1, 10

[Report by Muhammad Jamal 'Arafah]

[Excerpt] Citing Khartoum, informed Sudanese sources have asserted that the talks held by Sudanese and Iranian delegations during Iranian President Hashemi-Rafsanjani's visit to Sudan which ended 16 December focused on trade and economic cooperation. Agreements to barter foodstuff and industrial products were signed. The sources denied rumors disseminated by foreign intelligence services that bases for the Iranian Revolutionary Guard have been established in Sudan as a substitute for bases in Lebanon, and that Iran has financed Sudanese arms purchases that include Chinese aircraft. The sources noted that despite Iran's sincere wish to aid Sudan as a Muslim country and Iranian Defense Minister Torkan's statement about assisting Sudan in its fight against the southern rebel movement, the Iranians realize the need to open up to the West and to Arab countries, particularly Egypt and the Gulf countries, and that they understand the fears expressed by their neighbors in the Gulf and Egypt. For this reason, military cooperation between the two countries has been limited to supplying Sudan with light arms. [passage omitted]

Opposition Makes 'Major Progress' on Cease-Fire

PM2012142091 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 19 Dec 91 p 1

['Uthman Mirghani report: "Libya Makes Mediation Contacts Between Khartoum and Garang Movement"]

[Text] London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—The two wings of the Garang movement have said that they have made major progress in the first phase of the negotiations between them in Nairobi which concluded yesterday. They will resume 25 February.

Confirming AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT's report, the two sides agreed on a joint statement defining the most notable points of disagreement, first and foremost, the consolidation of the cease-fire agreement between the two sides, provided that the committee assigned to observe this agreement begins its work immediately.

The two sides have also agreed to release 40 political prisoners held in the movement's prisons, in addition to officers and troops detained by the two sides' forces since the "al-Nasir group" issued the statement on the split in August. It has been agreed to release these detainees before the coming holidays. The statement—signed by James Wani Iga for the Garang wing (or the Torit group) and Dr. Lam Akol for the dissident wing (al-Nasir group)—cited the agreement that the two sides' forces should remain in the positions that they occupied on 17 December.

The two sides also agreed to form a four-member committee comprising representatives from each wing to continue to work in Nairobi as a liaison committee, to monitor the dialogue and prepare for the second phase of the negotiations in February.

The two sides pointed out that they support democracy within the movement but they have not yet reached an agreement on the reorganization process and how to form the new leadership. They said that they will continue to work to resolve the outstanding issue with a view to reunifying the movement.

It has been noted that the statement does not include any reference to the subject of southern Sudan's separation, which the dissident group included among its main

demands. It has also been noted that the two sides decided to maintain the policy of not issuing any statements or press statements likely to affect current negotiations.

Meanwhile, informed sources have told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that Libya contacted the Garang movement, asking it to send a delegation to Tripoli to hold talks with Libyan officials.

The sources believe that Libya—which supported the Garang movement with money and arms during the era of former Sudanese President Ja'far Numayri—is currently seeking to mediate between Garang and the government of Lieutenant General 'Umar al-Bashir.

Sudan and Libya signed an agreement on integration leading to unity. Tripoli recently sent Sudan shipments of oil and arms.

State Says Armed Forces 'Control' Southern Darfur

EA2012191191 Omdurman Sudan Broadcasting Service Network in English 1500 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Text] The armed forces' official spokesman, Major General Muhammad 'Abdullah Uwaydah, affirmed that the armed forces control the situation all over war fronts, particularly in the south of Darfur. In a press statement, Uwaydah said that the rebels are undergoing a state of frustration due to the deep split which the agents and churches failed to repair, in spite of their huge capabilities, noting to their demoralization stage they suffered following their defeat in south of Darfur [as heard].

He added that the armed forces, backed by the Darfur tribes' knights, discovered a number of documents that reveal the rebels' hopeless attempt to mislead the world, adding that these documents will be shown to the public opinion soon. Uwaydah said that the rebels try to campaign for separation propaganda, which is refused by Darfur Muslim people.

Tunisia

Libyan Official Comments on Talks With President

LD2112200291 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] This morning President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali received Mr. Ibrahim al-Bishari, secretary of the Libyan Jamahiriyah's General People's Committee for External Liaison, who made a statement following the audience. He said: I was honored to be received by his excellency the president, to whom I conveyed a message that concerns a number of important topics falling within the framework of the Arab Maghreb Union's [AMU] relations with other countries from his brother Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi. On this occasion I would like to praise and salute the excellent role being played personally by his excellency the president, by Tunisia, and by the Tunisian Government within the framework of their support for Libya to find an honorable solution acceptable to all parties to the regrettable Lockerbie incident, which we have all agreed to condemn. His excellency the president's efforts, as well as those of Tunisia, are not new; they as old as 7 November [1987—when Ben Ali took power], since the days when there were problems between Libya and Chad. These efforts are aimed at repairing relations between Libya and the United States.

Our talks also focused on the meeting of the AMU's foreign ministers due to take place in Marrakech tomorrow. The president has recommended coordination between AMU countries' stands on this issue as well as other issues.

The audience was attended by Habib Ben Yahia, foreign minister; and 'Abd al-Atti al-Ubaydi, the general commissioner [as heard] of the Jamahiriyah in Tunis.

President Ben Ali Makes Visit to France

WA2012091691

For Tunis reportage on the visit by President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali to France, including reports on his talks with French President Francois Mitterrand, see the France section of the 20 December West Europe DAILY REPORT and subsequent issues.

Western Sahara

Polisario Rejects UN Postponement of Referendum

LD2212101991 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 0600 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] Perez de Cuellar's new plan on Western Sahara has angered the Saharans. The Polisario [Popular Front for the Liberation of Saquia El Hamra and Rio de Oro] Front rejected the new plan, which stipulates the postponement of the date of the Saharan People's referendum on self-determination for some months, and described it as unjust and biased in favor of Morocco. Furthermore, the Polisario made an appeal to the Security Council and the international community to reject Perez de Cuellar's plan so as to avoid the collapse of the peace plan in the Western Sahara.

Here is Mr. Ibrahim Hakim, the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic's ambassador to Algiers, answering our colleague Jahida Khalfaoui's question about who bears responsibility for the latest developments witnessed by the implementation of the UN plan:

[Begin recording] [Hakim] The postponement of this referendum is due to the stubbornness of the Moroccan side, its rejection of UN resolutions, and its choice of the head-in-the-sand [al-hurub ila al-amam] policy. This is the fundamental and real factor in the postponement of this referendum and the encouragement and promotion of the state of no stability and no peace in the Arab Maghreb region.

[Khalfaoui] Do you think that there is a change in the list left by Spain in 1975?

[Hakim] There are attempts currently being made to enter some criteria on the list. These attempts are rejected, and they will be rejected by the Saharan people, because they are totally different from what had been agreed upon by the two warring sides, which are the Saharan people and the Kingdom of Morocco. Therefore, anything that is new and which does not pertain to the peace plan is not accepted by the Polisario Front and the Saharan government.

[Khalfaoui] Your Excellency the Ambassador, the British daily THE INDEPENDENT published a news report today which says that the plan submitted to the Security Council allows Moroccan citizens to take part in the UN referendum. What is your comment on this?

[Hakim] This is what made us say that the new proposals made by the [UN] secretary general, and precisely those made yesterday in particular, are totally rejected, because these proposals are in fact aimed at hanging [as heard] the Saharan people by the thousands or hundreds of thousands of Moroccan settlers. [end recording]

Saharans Claim Moroccans Building Defense Centers

LD1912225991 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2200 GMT 19 Dec 91

[Text] A statement issued this evening by the Saharan Ministry of Information and Culture said that Moroccan military units stationed outside the defense wall have started work aimed at building defense centers to consolidate their positions. The statement said that this kind of act is only aimed at hampering the efforts aimed at retaining the cease-fire and holding the self- determination referendum in implementation of the UN peace plan.

A British news agency reported that Mr. Johannes Manz officially announced today his resignation from the leadership of the UN mission with which he was entrusted with a view to holding the self-determination referendum in the Western Sahara. Mr. Johannes Manz will be his country's ambassador to the United Nations.

AFP news from Rabat says that the resignation of Johannes Manz as the representative of the UN secretary general to the Western Saharan referendum will lead to a delay in the holding of the referendum.

On the other hand, the Saharan foreign minister met today in the Nigerian capital of Abuja with Nigerian President Ibrahim Babangida. The talks of the two parties focused on the referendum for Western Sahara.

Kuwait

Foreign Minister on Iraqi Threat, GCC

LD2212230391 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1821 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Excerpts] Kuwait, 22 Dec (KUNA)— Speaking here tonight, Shaykh Salim al-Sabah, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, described relations between the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] countries and Iran as "good". He stressed that there is continued coordination between the two sides in security, political, and economic spheres.

At a news conference held at the conclusion of the GCC foreign ministers meeting, he said: Iran has great importance, and it is a big Islamic country in the Arabian Gulf. He said that Gulf-Iranian relations will be on the agenda of the 12th GCC summit, due to open tomorrow.

With regard to security conditions in the Gulf region, Shaykh Salim said that a committee headed by Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id, the Omani monarch, has been studying this matter and submitted its report to the GCC leaders two days ago. He did not disclose the contents of the report, which was not discussed by the Ministerial Council which concluded its work here today. However, he pointed out that the GCC leaders will review the report during their meetings.

He said that the forces of the Peninsula Shield were more important than any security agreement among the six GCC member countries. He added that the contribution of these forces to the liberation of Kuwait was based more on emotions than on realism. [sentence as received]

The deputy prime minister and foreign minister stressed that the GCC member states will take part in the third stage of the multilateral talks on the resolution of the Middle East problem, expected to be held in Moscow next month, in accordance with what has been agreed on. He said that, on the basis of the results of the third stage of the talks, the GCC countries will decide whether to continue their participation in the coming stages of the Middle East settlement talks. [passage omitted]

On whether there is still a threat to Kuwait in the aftermath of the Iraqi regime's occupation of Kuwait in August 1990, Shaykh Salim al-Sabah said that the threat is still there and will remain, that the Iraqi invasion cost us a great deal, and that we, as part of the Arab world and as a small country, must learn a lesson from that invasion. This lesson should be heeded by all the countries that are humanly incapable of protecting their security and stability, he stated. He added that Kuwait has signed a security agreement with the United States and is about to sign a similar agreement with the United Kingdom, that it is studying the signing of another agreement with France, and that the idea has been put to China and the Soviet Union which have expressed their support for it. He explained that the objective of the security agreement is to defend Kuwait and not to attack anyone. He pointed out that the Iraqi military arsenals are still there and, consequently, the threat is still there.

In an answer to another question on the security agreement with the United States as a foreign power serving its own interests in the region, Shaykh Salim stressed that the the recent security changes in the region were caused by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. He stated that this was imposed on us by the Iraqi regime. He asserted that this barbaric invasion, which he described as a hideous crime, had come from an Arab state that "claimed to be Islamic".

He added that this security agreement between Kuwait and the United States was the result of popular demand, and he declared that the Kuwaiti leadership attaches importance to the interests, security, and stability of Kuwait and the Kuwaitis. He said that this agreement was clearly in line with the principle of non-interference in domestic affairs, resulting in our "free political decision to protect our beliefs and institutions". [passage omitted]

Shaykh Salim stressed that Kuwait and its people will not forget the Iraqi invasion which he described as "barbaric, savage, and inhuman". He stated that Kuwait is not prepared to restore relations with the Iraqi regime and the states that gave it practical support and assistance. He emphasized that this stems from the feeling of the Kuwaiti people, who, he believes are not prepared to listen to such talk at the present time.

Regarding Kuwait's abstention on the vote on the UN General Assembly decision to abrogate the resolution equating Zionism with racism which it previously endorsed in 1975, Shaykh Salim al-Sabah indicated that Kuwait's special interest prompted this stance.

He stressed that the Damascus Declaration, which was signed by the six GCC states, Syria, and Egypt is established as it has been adopted. He pointed out that the next meeting will be held in Doha, Qatar, in April.

On the loan that Kuwait recently took out, the Kuwaiti deputy prime minister and foreign minister indicated that Kuwait asked for a loan for two reasons: first of all, to reconstruct what the Iraqi regime had destroyed in Kuwait; and, second, to carry out our duty as a state which keeps its word regarding the projects to which it was committed, in accordance with their importance. [passage omitted]

Shaykh Salim al-Sabah stressed that Kuwait withdrew the Kuwaiti citizenship which had been granted to Khalid al-Hasan, who occupies the post of political adviser to the PLO chairman, after having ascertained that the aforementioned person had violated Kuwaiti citizenship law pertaining to the impermissibility of obtaining another citizenship in addition to the Kuwaiti one. The deputy prime minister and foreign minister explained that Khalid al-Hasan obtained Kuwaiti citizenship after demonstrating his good intentions and desire to become a citizen here, but he had used the same method in Morocco to get Moroccan citizenship...and he

got it. He added that after ascertaining through brother officials in Morocco that the same person had obtained Moroccan citizenship, Kuwait embarked on implementing legal procedures against him and withdrew his Kuwaiti citizenship.

Saudi Arabia

Official Announces $2.1 Million Given to PLO

NC2212135791 Paris AFP in English 1322 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] Riyadh, Dec 22 (AFP)—Saudi Arabia has given the Palestine Liberation Organisation eight million riyals, about 2.1 million dollars, despite tense relations between them since the Gulf crisis, it was announced here Sunday.

'Abd-al-Rahim Jamus, director of a Saudi Palestinian aid committee, told AFP the money was partly from private Saudi donations and partly from a five percent tax taken from the salaries of Palestinian expatriate workers.

The committee was set up several years ago to provide financial support to the Palestinian resistance against Israel and is chaired by the amir of Riyadh, Prince Salman Bin 'Abd-al-'Aziz.

The support group transfers money every two months to the National Palestinian Fund, which is linked to the PLO.

The latest amount is the third installment announced by Riyadh since the start of the Gulf crisis, during which the PLO supported Iraq against a U.S.-led coalition of Arab and Western forces.

Nine million dollars was transfered to the PLO in September and three million dollars was sent in October in moves coinciding with PLO endorsement of a Middle East peace conference.

Saudi Arabia, a key component of the U.S.-led anti-Iraq coalition, froze its ties with the PLO at the end of last year and suspended all financial aid to the Palestinian organisation.

Before Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 and its seven-month occupation of the emirate, Saudi Arabia gave the PLO 85.5 million dollars each year.

Son of al-Asad Arrives for Visit 21 Dec

LD2112132591 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 1155 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Excerpt] Riyadh, 21 Dec (SPA)—The son of Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, Staff Major engineer Basil al-Asad, arrived here today on a visit to the Kingdom lasting several days. [passage omitted]

Saddam Praises Telecommunications Reconstruction

JN2212205391 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1903 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] Leader President Saddam Husayn today met with a number of industrial and media specialists to inquire about the level of their accomplishments in the field of reconstruction.

His excellency the leader president said: May God bless you, and all state organs, for you have done something considered inconceivable by others. However, what you have done was never viewed as inconceivable by us. We continue to believe that the Iraqis, including the speaker himself, have additional potential not yet utilized as it should be. When this potential is utilized as it should be, then it inevitably will yield better and more beneficial results.

Leader President Saddam Husayn added: When your comrades in the Regional Command yesterday attempted to praise Saddam Husayn and the stands he adopted during the hard circumstances, with which you are well aware, I told them: I have a courage of the kind that you are describing. I would be more courageous, however, if we were to engage in another arena of jihad. I meant to say: There might be some people who could assume that we have attained the highest levels of courage, and that this is a courage that cannot be compared with that of others. This is a fact. However, I am certain that there is within me, and within all Iraqis as well, a courage that could be more resolute if the experience were to be repeated. With respect to this aspect, courage is a kind of accumulation of experience. Because we have gained further experience under hard circumstances, our courage will exceed the limits it has thus far reached. Now we have begun to fulfill ourselves and to be rightfully proud of what we have achieved. Now our nationalism has begun to assume its proper proportions and to reach the depth it is supposed to reach.

His excellency the leader president said: We identify efficiency with the basic determination engulfing Iraqis these days. We do not measure it in comparison with our previous state of affairs.

His excellency the leader president added: Regardless of the fact that the time of miracles in the familiar sense of the word has become a thing of the past, your situation, O Iraqis, at this age and your harmonious handling of the components of this age can never but be viewed as a new kind of miracle. This is because your way of doing things, which reflects interaction with the age and its spirit, cannot be divorced from the methods meant to be employed by the great God and which He meant to be used by you in this age, a time replete with violations of God's injunctions and with encroachments on mankind's sublime values.

His excellency the leader president wondered: What could possibly make any country be so proud as to say no to the United States? It is not important for the USSR, when it was a USSR, to say so. What is important is for a country such as Iraq, with a population of no more than 18 million, to utter this no. This no of yours, and not that of greater countries, is what makes other weak countries feel that they can walk in your footsteps and say no. As for the reasons for rejection, this is because saying yes could have been tantamount to the death of all good values. That is why you said no. It is one of the glorious chapters in your history and in your jihad in the Mother of Battles. As for the other chapter which followed it, this chapter shows that in a Third World country which has been the scene of all this devastation—devastation seen by some people, heard of by all, and assessed by others—electrical services have been restored to all houses and facilities after all power stations had been hit; drinking water services have been restored; energy services have been brought back to normal after all refining installations had been sabotaged; and radio and television transmission has been restored after installations had been destroyed. Indeed, all aspects of life have been returned to normal.

This is therefore your other chapter, one which is replete with glory. It followed the chapter of challenging colonialism and its agents. It is God's will that gave you assistance. There is no way that anyone can thwart God's will. As for your enemies, if they want to they can do it without God's assistance because they are in the wrong; however, they will not attain the results they want through their actions.

The leader president said: In order to explain to you how great your message is—I mean your humanitarian message, which transcends the national and the pan-Arab—suffice it to say that you have become a paragon to be emulated, a model that sacrificed in order to save humanity from the evil fate and to stem the tyranny under whose hammer Zionism and the United States wanted to place the world.

The leader president said: In the past, life was simple and the number of craftsmen was limited. A craftsman could guarantee his family a decent standard of living. Therefore, people used to say of a craftsman that his hand cut gold and silver; that is, he is very skillful and happy. Let me tell you that your hands cut gold and silver in the metaphorical sense because with God's will you are now heightening the morale of all Third World countries and not only that of your steadfast and mujahid people. I say the Third World because we are part of it.

The cultural resurgence that you are undertaking is not being undertaken by an advanced country. Therefore, it cannot be said that this is normal for such a state, that Third World countries are incapable of catching up with it because of gaps and differences. However, the country which is carrying out these glorious deeds in the field of construction is a Third World country, one limited in area and population and modest in resources when evaluated by traditional standards and not according to the standards that we believe in. This country, Iraq, is waging the battle of reconstruction under an unjust siege and is doing what it is doing. In other words, this rules out any form of interconnection between Iraq and other

states. No one can claim that this signboard is imported or that that structure is built by foreign hands. No, everything is being built entirely with Iraqi resources, expertise, and energy. However, we did not reach this stage until faith had filled the hearts of those who had such energy and until men's determination had been dipped in faith.

The president said: I thank those who have repaired what the aggressors destroyed in the field of radio and television. We passed through circumstance where it was difficult for us to make ourselves heard to our people in the southern and northern parts of the homeland. Our people had continued to hear all the lies and forgeries transmitted by the evil ones from abroad to deceive their own people and to undermine the spirit of Iraqi citizens.

We were unable to make our voice heard. Of course, they conveyed a distorted version of our voice despite their claims about democracy and the freedom of the media.

The leader president said: I would like you to view your efforts within this framework. Beware of imagining that what you have achieved is merely a technical job that surpassed your previous work only because of the accumulation of your experience. I truly tell you that the spirit is the basis. Had you not had your national, pan-Arab, and human feeling and the urge to reject and defy injustice, you would not have achieved what you did. None of these motives are material factors. I would like to add that had you not seen the bright future, you would not have seen the right path.

God be praised for this. God bless your efforts and those of your brothers who work in the media field, be they industrial workers who helped the media men or those who work in the Ministry of Information and who have experienced the spirit of the new challenge.

The meeting was attended by Hasan Hamdan al-'Azzawi, director of the president's office, and Hamid Yusuf Hammadi, minister of information.

Saddam Orders Reward for Return of Stolen Cars

JN2212124391 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] Leader President Saddam Husayn has ordered that 1,000 dinars be given, as a noble gesture from his excellency, to each and every citizen who provides information leading to the return of a stolen car, or to the citizen who plays an effective role in seizing the car and returning it to its rightful owner.

This measure is within the framework of his excellency's honoring of positive practices that contribute to reinforcing security and stability and to safeguarding citizens' property.

It is worth mentioning that the Interior Ministry last week announced that it would give 1,000 dinars to every citizen who provides information leading to the seizure of any stolen car or to the citizen who plays an effective role in seizing the car and returning it to its rightful owner.

The Interior Ministry is continuing efforts to curb car thefts through its speedy measures to protect citizens' property and to safeguard their stability and security.

Saddam Chairs Regional Command Meeting

JN2112205891 Baghdad INA in Arabic 2040 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] Baghdad, 21 Dec (INA)—President Saddam Husayn, secretary of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party Regional Command, chaired a meeting of the Ba'th Party Regional Command today.

The meeting was attended by Hatim Hamdan al-'Azzawi, head of the presidential office.

Source Comments on Decision To Continue Blockade

JN2112093491 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0907 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] Baghdad, 21 Dec (INA)—An official source in Baghdad has said: The UN Security Council yesterday decided to give its expected Christmas gift to the Iraqi people by approving the continuation of the blockade that has so far been imposed on Iraq for 16 months.

In a statement to INA today, the source added: The Bush administration, Major's government, and Mitterrand's government are basically legally and personally responsible for the deaths of 170,000 Iraqi children from malnutrition and as a result of depriving them of medicine. This is in addition to the legal and personal responsibility of these three governments for the deaths of 200,000 patients since the blockade was imposed on Iraq in August 1990 as a result of the lack of medicine and medical equipment.

The source said: These hypocrite governments and the parties collaborating with them accuse the Iraqi Government of preventing food from reaching the Kurds in Iraq. At the same time, however, they are imposing a blockade on Iraq with its Kurds and Arabs.

The source added: The day will come when the blockade will collapse. However, the Iraqis, Arabs, Kurds, and their future generations will never forget or forgive this crime of annihilating hundreds of thousands of children and sick people.

Paper Views Blockade's Continuation

JN2212085891 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0728 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] Baghdad, 22 Dec (INA)—The newspaper AL-JUMHURIYAH has said that the leaders of the blockade will not be able to confiscate the Iraqi brain, which possesses the ability to break the barriers of the impossible and to confront difficulties.

In an editorial today, the paper notes: Iraq's people have never expected the leaders who imposed the unjust blockade to make a brave decision to renounce their sin. This is why Iraq's people were not surprised by the UN Security Council's new resolution on continuing the blockade against them.

The paper emphasizes: When Iraq calls for lifting the blockade, it calls for a legitimate and clear right recognized by all international laws and norms. The UN Security Council resolutions have become captive to the aggressive and unjust U.S. position.

The paper adds: America and its allies should know that Iraq's people do not accept charity from the killers of their children, women, and old people. Moreover, they do not expect these criminal killers to change their stands overnight.

The paper affirms that the world will realize the just Iraqi position. It will also realize the extent of the big U.S. crime which caused the deaths of 370,000 Iraqis as a result of the blockade. It is the crime of the age which is being perpetrated by the big powers, led by the United States, against the Iraqi people. It is a crime which cannot be ignored.

Official Refutes UN Chief's Report on War Blame

JN2112143091 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1320 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] Baghdad, 21 Dec (INA)—The Foreign Relations Bureau of the Ba'th Party Regional Command has asserted that the UN secretary general's two reports on the Iraq-Iran war represent a purely personal opinion and have absolutely no legal value.

In letters sent today to brothers and friends in the Arab homeland and throughout the world, 'Abd-al-Ghani 'Abd-al-Ghafur, member of the Ba'th Party Regional Command and the official in charge of the Regional Command's Foreign Relations Bureau, said that Perez de Cuellar's two reports are part of a suspect deal, the U.S.-Atlantic-Zionist plots against Iraq, and the recent chapter of the unjust blockade imposed on Iraq.

The letters affirm that if Iran wants to reach a comprehensive, just, and peaceful settlement in accordance with Resolution No. 598, the way is clear to achieve this goal through goodwill and by giving up buffoonery, the distortion of facts, blackmail, and threats, from which Tehran gained nothing except disappointment and the failure of its expansionist and racist plan.

The letters explain that the historical facts pertaining to the Iranian aggression against Iraq cannot be concealed at all. Iraq has evidence and documents confirming Iran's responsibility for launching the unjust war against Iraq for eight years—a war which inflicted heavy material and human losses on Iraq and wasted money and effort that should have been used to serve construction and progress.

Report Linked to Hostage 'Deals'

JN2212152991 Baghdad INA in English 1310 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] Baghdad, Dec. 22, INA—AL-THAWRAH daily, organ of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party, said United Nations Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar's report on the Iraq-Iran war was a reward for Tehran for the role it played in releasing the American hostages held in Lebanon.

In an article published today, the daily criticized De Cuellar for becoming a tool in the hands of the United States to play the role of a broker to strike dubious deals.

The daily confirmed that the former international official had skipped many historical facts when writing this report, in the forefront of which is the fact that Iran was solely responsible for igniting the war and launching an armed aggression against Iraq on Sept. 4, 1980.

It pointed out that De Cuellar could not deny that Iran had rejected all U.N. Security Council resolutions calling for an end to the dispute and for permanent and comprehensive peace in the region.

The daily underlined that De Cuellar's report was nothing but a personal point of view that had no important or legal value.

Referring to Iranian President Hashemi-Rafsanjani's statements in which he expressed thanks for De Cuellar, the daily said that Hashemi-Rafsanjani did not forget, while thanking the U.N. secretary general, to stress his regime's commitment to the items of the deal it had signed with De Cuellar which was meant to change Iran's terrorist and extremist image before the United States and its allies.

Foreign Ministry Scores UN Zionism Act's Repeal

JN2112163691 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1540 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] Baghdad, 21 Dec (INA)—The Foreign Ministry has described the repeal of the 1975 UN resolution deeming Zionism a form of racism as a purely U.S.-Zionist decision, one which will change neither facts nor history.

In a statement issued today concerning the UN General Assembly's 16 December decision to repeal its former resolution, the Foreign Ministry said that this decision emphasizes the U.S. control over the United Nations and its resolutions. The Security Council's resolutions pertaining to the 30-state aggression against Iraq were an example of this.

In its statement, the ministry pointed out that the historic resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10 November 1975 defining the nature of Zionism as a form of racism and racial discrimination was a great and historic step within the framework of the global solidarity with the Palestinian people, whose inalienable national rights were usurped by Zionism, and that this

also was a ruling against the most dangerous expansionist movement allied with imperialism and the racist regime in South Africa. The repeal, it added, will have serious repercussions for the future of all Arabs and the future of all humanity.

The statement adds: Since then, Israel has persistently ignored and shown disdain for all UN resolutions, which unanimously condemn the Zionist entity's repressive and racist practices against the unarmed Palestinian people. No one, it said, supported that entity in its isolation except the United States and some Western European countries, which often found themselves compelled to condemn its repressive practices against women, children, and old people in Palestine, as well as its refusal to comply with the Geneva Conventions of 1949 that apply to the territories it occupied in 1967, including holy Jerusalem.

In its statement, the Foreign Ministry explains that Israel had escalated its racist measures and that these measures reached their climax with the launching of the Palestinian people's intifadah, during which the children of Palestine have offered the highest percentage of martyrs because they hoisted the Palestinian flag or hurled stones at the soldiers who occupy their land. The world at large has seen with their naked eye and through the international media the Zionists' practices in terms of bone-breaking, the demolition of houses, evictions and expulsions, the closure of schools, and the armed storming of hospitals. The intifadah continues while only a few weeks have passed since the UN General Assembly passed its resolution supporting the intifadah, the same resolution that the international body had adopted year after year for the past three years.

The Foreign Ministry emphasizes that the United States deemed it necessary to tarnish its record, which is replete with hostile actions toward the people of Palestine, with yet another mark of disgrace. Thus, it did its best over a period of one year to repeal this historic resolution and, to do this, it resorted to all the means of pressure and blackmail at its disposal. It did so while the practices of the racist Zionist entity during the years of the intifadah have confirmed the soundness of this resolution, and that Zionism is really a racist movement which no one can dispute. The United States submitted a resolution which contained no introduction or argument that refutes what is contained in the text of Resolution 3379 [word indistinct] 10 October 1991.

In its statement, the Foreign Ministry adds that with this resolution the United States has again reaffirmed its hostility toward the struggle of the Palestinian people, who have suffered the greatest injustice in modern history and in which the United Nations participated when it approved the establishment of the racist Zionist state at the expense of the expulsion of the indigenous inhabitants, killing them, torturing them, and incarcerating them in concentration camps which still exist in the Negev and in other areas of occupied Palestine.

The statement explains that the resolution which the UN General Assembly passed on 16 December, repealing Resolution 3379, does not change the reality of what is taking place in terms of racist Zionist practices against all that is Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim. It also does not alter the fact that Israel seeks to impose its racist hegemony and control by way of its nuclear weapons program and its possession of weapons of mass destruction, over which the United States and its allies have kept silent because Israel is the actual partner in the development of these weapons. Therefore, we are not surprised that the United States uses its leverage and methods of deception to make the UN General Assembly pass a resolution which cannot be substantiated on the ground and which has no basis in recent history.

The statement emphasizedes that the main goal of the Zionist movement is to establish a Jewish state in Palestine and assemble world Jewry there. Speaking in 1947 to the Anglo-U.S. fact-finding commission on Palestine, David Ben-Gurion defined the Jewish state as follows: "Jewish land, Jewish labor, Jewish economy, Jewish agriculture, Jewish industry, Jewish sea."

The Foreign Ministry statement refers to the Zionist principles that are based on religious and racial discrimination and says that these principles have been embodied not only in the practices of the Zionist entity, but also in the basic laws of the Jewish state, such as the law of return, the law of nationality, and the laws on the expropriation of land—all of which reflect discrimination against the Palestinians and deprive these people of their basic rights to their territory and homeland.

Concluding, the statement says that the new U.S.-Zionist resolution proves U.S. hegemony over the United Nations and its resolutions, just like the Security Council resolutions issued to cover the 30-state aggression against Iraq which was masterminded and led by the United States as part of a U.S.-Zionist-Atlantic scheme aimed at imposing hegemony on the Arab nation, enslaving it, and looting its wealth. This will not, however, affect the determination of the people of Palestine and the Arab and Islamic nation to attain rights and return them to their legitimate owners.

Troops Ease Blockade on Kurds; 80,000 Return

NC2212131091 Paris AFP in English 1245 GMT 22 Dec 91

[By Lachlan Carmichael]

[Text] Baghdad, Dec 22 (AFP)—Iraqi troops are allowing large supplies of fuel to enter northern Kurdish areas for the first time in two months and up to 80,000 Kurds have returned home causing a significant easing in regional tension, U.N. officials said Sunday.

Funds for cash-strapped banks and government sugar rations have in the past few days also moved through Iraqi Army checkpoints, which had previously blocked their passage as part of a two-month standoff with

Kurdish guerrillas, according to United Nations administrator Pierre Francois Pirlot.

"If everything continues the way it is, we should arrive at some kind of stability for a while," Pirlot told AFP by telephone from al-Sulaymaniyah.

But Pirlot, deputy chief of mission for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), said Baghdad had still to resume most government food rations to the Kurdish provinces of Irbil, al-Sulaymaniyah and Dahuk.

About 100,000 government employees have yet to receive their pay for the past months, Pirlot added.

The day the provincial governors return to their posts will be "the sign of things going back to normal," he explained.

Besides the governors, many employees accused of being Iraqi intelligence officers have fled Kurdish regions.

Panos Moumtzis, a UNHCR spokesman in Baghdad, reported that relatively large fuel shipments were also being allowed through to Irbil and Dahuk, but he too said it was "premature" to announce the end of the standoff.

The trouble began in late October when the Iraqi Government accused the Kurdish authorities of failing to provide security for government employees in Kurdistan.

Kurdish authorities charged that the government had imposed a food and fuel embargo on their region and accused Baghdad of shelling, which they said sparked the exodus of some 200,000 people to wintery highland and mountain areas.

But Pirlot said between 60,000 and 80,000 had returned to their homes in Klar and other nearby towns in the past two weeks as tension eased.

The Iraqi Government has denied the existence of an embargo and said there was enough food in Kurdistan.

U.N. officials confirmed that food was available on the black market in Kurdistan—but at astronomical prices.

They also reported severe shortages of gasoline and long lines at service stations, with prices sometimes five times the normal rate for the rest of Iraq.

But Pirlot, who reported that tank trucks had passed the checkpoints both Friday and Saturday, said he had been told by Kurds that about a quarter of the normal shipments of gasoline were now getting through.

The Kurdistan Front, a coalition of Kurdish nationalist parties, announced December 11 it had agreed to guarantee the security of government employees in Kurdistan if Baghdad lifted the food and fuel embargo.

The Front gave the government 10 days to respond.

If the trouble is resolved, Pirlot said, there could even be a resumption in negotiations on Kurdish autonomy with Baghdad. The talks began in April after a Kurdish uprising was quashed but broke down in October.

Letter to UN Protests U.S. Overflight

JN2112113491 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0903 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] New York, 21 Dec (INA)—Iraq today protested U.S. U-2 spy plane violations of Iraqi airspace on the pretext of conducting reconnaissance and an aerial survey for the UN Special Committee.

In a letter to UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar, Foreign Minister Ahmad Husayn said that this is the 19th violation of Iraq's airspace and its sovereignty since the plane began its espionage operations four months ago. He noted that this action conflicts with the principles of justice and respect for the territorial sovereignty of states, and that it is taking place with the knowledge of the United Nations and the UN special committee in the interest of the United States and its hostile plans against Iraq.

In his letter, the foreign minister affirmed that a U.S. U-2 spy plane, code-named UNT-1, entered Iraq's airspace on 16 December from Saudi territory. The plane overflew Iraqi cities, villages, and hamlets for five hours and 50 minutes, after which it left Iraqi airspace for Saudi airspace.

Cleric Kho'i Denies Reports of Failing Health

JN2112085291 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0758 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] Baghdad, 21 Dec (INA)—His Eminence Imam Abolqasem Kho'i has denied reports disseminated by AFP about the deterioration of his health and a lack of adequate medical care.

In an interview at his home in al-Kufah and published today, His Eminence Kho'i told the newspaper BABIL that he is leading a normal and tranquil life and that he is not suffering from any health indisposition. He beseeched God Almighty to preserve President Saddam Husayn and to make him live long in the interest of the Iraqi people.

Meanwhile, Muhammad Taqiy Kho'i, the son of His Eminence Abolqasem Kho'i, said that his eminence normally spends his days receiving his visitors, in answering their questions and religious queries, in replying to letters addressed to him regarding religious affairs, in reading [the Koran] and in prayers, and in receiving religious science students.

Mr. Haydar Muhammad Hasan al-Kalidar, custodian of the Haydari Shrine, spoke about the leadership's exceptional care of Abolqasem Kho'i. He said that there is a special medical committee formed by the state which visits his eminence periodically to inquire about his health and to make sure that all of his organs are functioning properly. He stated that His Eminence

Imam Kho'i is not suffering from any emergency condition or incurable diseases other than some signs of aging. He noted that Imam Kho'i is now 92 years old.

Dr. Sa'id Radi, deputy director general of the health department in al-Najaf, said that Imam Abolqasem Kho'i's family keeps in touch with the health authorities to inform them of any changes or developments in the condition of his health. His family, he added, has not contacted us for approximately two months to ask for any medical consultation or examination. This proves that the health of his eminence is normal and stable.

40 Killed in Intraregime Clashes in al-Anbar

NC2112174691 (Clandestine) Voice of the Iraqi People in Arabic 1500 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] Fierce clashes took place over the past few days between elements of Saddam's central military intelligence service and elements of military intelligence in al-Anbar Governorate. Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq sources said that the clashes continued for more than six hours and left more than 40 dead between the two sides. Extreme tension prevails in al-Anbar Governorate, and isolated shooting is heard at night.

It should be noted that the majority of the people in this governorate who used to work in the tyrant Saddam's services have began to leave their places of work and join their people, particularly after the crimes that the criminal Saddam has committed against certain figures, ulema, and tribes of this governorate and the other rebellious governorates in Iraq.

'Popular Forces' Kill 30 Soldiers in Kirkuk

LD2212180191 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] The popular forces of Kafra, in Kirkuk Province of Iraq, recently repulsed an attack by the forces of Saddam's regime. The Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, announcing this, stated: In the course of this clash, 30 troops of the Saddam regime, including one brigadier general and one Army captain, were killed. During these operations, the popular forces captured a considerable quantity of weapons and military equipment from the Iraqi Army.

Health Officials Comment on War-Related Dangers

JN2212171191 Baghdad INA in English 1515 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] Baghdad, Dec 22, INA—The destruction of electric power facilities and water and waste water treatment plants by allied bombings during the war seems to have entailed a cycle of contamination. Untreated sewage water now flows into river, thus resulting in the spread of many waste-borne diseases among the population. The environmental hazards and poor sanitation caused by the U.S.-led aggression on Iraq have put the population face-to-face with such water-borne diseases, especially those who live in rural areas.

For many Iraqis, it is difficult to escape such diseases because pathogenic microbes born in contaminated water supplies are creating a state of epidemic.

Prevention is hampered by incapacitated water and sewage treatment facilities and the paralysis of disease vector control programme due to lack of pesticides. Likewise, treatment is hamstrung due to shortage of medical supplies and health facilities.

The situation is further worsened because of the use of uranium-made missiles by anti-Iraq coalition forces during the war. According to the under secretary of health, Dr. Shawqi Sabri Murqus, the United States has turned Iraq into a field for conducting scientific experiments and testing its highly sophisticated weapons of mass destruction.

Dr. Murqus was quoted by AL-JUMHURIYAH daily as saying that the use of uranium-made missiles by American forces during its aggression on Iraq is prohibited by international laws and health organizations, adding that this crime provides an evidence confirming U.S. violations of international laws and human rights.

He added that enriched uranium of mass number 238 and 235 contain chemical poisons that threaten large-scale human and environmental damage.

The use of these weapons is usually accompanied by high temperature that almost melt minerals and burn surrounding living beings, including human, said Dr. Murqus. He added that poisons and radioactive waste which are emitted by such missiles cause serious environmental hazards that threaten the lives of the people.

Dr. Murqus went on to say that the Ministry of Health has started conducting studies to trace biological effects of these weapons and their impacts on the population's health, with respect to cancer and hereditary diseases that may occur during the coming 5-10 years.

Furthermore, explosions of uranium-made weapons usually release a number of chemical elements, among which is the iodine which is easily absorbed by the thyroid gland causing various type of cancer, such as skin, bones and respiratory tract cancers, said Dr. Murqus.

He added that the negative impacts of these lethal weapons spread to cover animal health, saying that fisheries will be threatened in the foreseeable future.

Dr. Murqus elaborated that the seizure of 'al-Shuruq' research ship in the Arab Gulf is but an attempt to cover up the extent of the spread of the bad effects of radioactive waste emitted from these weapons.

Moreover, the use of these lethal weapons will cause environmental hazards and a noticeable increase in cancer cases, hereditary diseases and mutation which is

almost certain to occur in the future, Dr Fa'iq 'Abd-al-Jabbar, specialist in cancer tumors, said. He added that till now we see inborn deformation among Japan's new-born, despite the passage of almost 46 years since the dropping of the nuclear bomb on Japan in 1945.

Earlier, Iraq has informed the United Nations that the American forces and their allies had used during their aggression anti-tank missiles made of uranium 238 which contains chemical poisons and radioactive materials that largely threaten the people and the environment in Iraq.

Iraq added that American tanks fired thousands of U238 missiles while U.S.-warplanes fired tens of thousands of these missiles on Iraqi targets.

Barzani Views Opposition Gathering in Damascus

JN2212180991 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1700 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] Mas'ud Barzani, leader of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan, has told the AL-HAYAH newspaper that he opposes using the Kurdish issue as a bargaining chip to pressure Baghdad or as a bridge for others to cross over and take power in Iraq.

It should be recalled that Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, chairman of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, one of the primary Iraqi opposition groups, arrived in Damascus yesterday. While there, he will present to the Syrian officials a plan to overthrow Iraqi President Saddam Husayn drawn up by Iran and Saudi Arabia under UN auspices, according to sources in Damascus.

A source from the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan said in Damascus that a delegation from the Kurdistan Front, which includes eight Kurdish parties, is expected in Damascus within the next few days to participate in the talks being undertaken by the various Iraqi opposition factions.

Barzani asserted that his front did not receive any invitation to attend the Iraqi opposition conference. Besides, he said, his front wants to know the framework that the conference will define for the Kurdish people's rights and the question of democracy in Iraq.

Likud Central Committee Convention Opens

'Great Tension' on Eve of Meeting

TA2112203391 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Hebrew 1900 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] The Likud Central Committee [CC] is convening in Tel Aviv tomorrow. Some 3,000 CC members will vote for or against the bill for the direct election of the prime minister; approve or reject the proposal to hold internal elections in the form of primaries [preceding word in English]; and also endorse the Likud constitution.

The CC convention is preceded by great tension among the various Likud camps. Our party affairs correspondent Hanan 'Azran reports from the studio:

The whole business seems to be a tangle, mainly because the members' views on every issue on tomorrow's agenda are affected by the extent of influence to be gained by the head of each and every camp contending for party leadership. The race for party leadership has already been launched, but will reach a climax on the eve of general elections in November 1992.

As will be remembered, the current CC's tenure will expire at the end of March 1992, following a court ruling. By then, the Likud has to hold a convention and either elect a new CC or come up with a structural formula settling the legal status of the extant CC.

Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir, who is against the present version of the proposal for the direct election of prime minister, has resorted to all his influence to fight it. It might be said, therefore, that for him the issue is a test of his power in the present CC.

The following are the crown contenders in the present CC: the Shamir-Arens camp, which claims to have a majority in the CC and is therefore uninterested in organizational changes and which still has the support of some members of the former Liberal Party rallied around Moshe Nisim; Sharon and Levi, each contending against Shamir and Arens for the Likud leadership, are apparently interested in any new development, such as a convention, that can reshuffle the present CC's cards. The assessment in the camps of Sharon and Levi differs from that of Shamir and Arens; the Sharon and Levi camps believe that a change in the power structure in the present CC will give them an edge.

The Liberal camp has yielded another center under the baton of Avraham Sharir. This center claims that the new constitution due to be endorsed tomorrow will strike the Liberals off the political map. For that reason, Liberals who are not affiliated with Nisim will strive to create a situation under which the tenure of the present CC will expire and a separate election of Knesset candidates will be held: The Liberals and Herut will each elect its candidates in its own CC.

It can be assumed that there is no danger that the Likud will break up tomorrow. The desire to remain the ruling party is unquestionably shared by all CC members. On the other hand, it is obvious that the resolution of the questions on the agenda—the prime minister election reform, the Likud constitution, and the primaries—will determine the power balance in the race for the ruling party's leadership in the coming months.

Shamir Addresses Gathering

TA2212163191 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1446 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Address by Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir to the Likud Central Committee session at the Tel Aviv Fairgrounds—live]

[Text] Mr. Chairman, Ministers, Knesset Members, Central Committee Members:

The Likud Central Committee convenes today at a time of trial, on the eve of a year of historic and far-reaching decisions for the people and the country. With the beginning of 1992, a year of Knesset elections, a race will start in which the Israeli people will make decisions that will determine the character and future of the State of Israel in the coming years. The Knesset elections will be held one day in 1992; we do not yet know the exact date. On that day the decision will be made as to which government will govern and lead the State of Israel for the next four years. On that day it will be determined whether there will be a national government that will hold on to Eretz Yisra'el while pursuing settlement on the domestic front and repelling serious attacks on its security and integrity in the international arena; or, God forbid, a government without a national spine that will give in to pressures from all sides and will lead the country to an abyss of dangers such as we have never experienced before.

This is the main problem ahead of us. True, there are other problems awaiting decisions—all of them important. Those pertain to the character of the regime, immigration and immigrant absorption, the economy, and society. Those are very important problems, but they are all dwarfed by the one supreme mission around which we should close our ranks and mobilize all our forces. We must muster all our ability and talents for the supreme task, which is to mobilize our forces to place at the head of our country, again in the future, a strong national government [applause] that will hold on to Eretz Yisra'el, act for the cause of peace, strengthen security, absorb massive aliyah, reinforce the Israeli economy, and iron out the distortions in the Israeli people's social and moral image.

I did not mention the issues and objectives to be debated in their order of importance, but I would like to assert with utmost sincerity and without detracting one bit from the merit and urgency of the objectives we must strive for, that the supreme and most urgent duty currently entrusted to the Likud—and to the Likud only—is the duty to conduct the political campaign for the preservation, security, and integrity of Eretz Yisra'el.

[applause] All the other issues, which are organically related to that main task, will be handled over a period of several years. The handling of those issues will be subject to changes, improvements, amendments, and ups and downs, but at present, the political issue is crucial. A poor result on election day, God forbid, might lead to a disaster to be rued for generations to come, to a national catastrophe that I do not know if, how, or when we will be able to overcome.

Therefore, dear friends, those are the priorities. Those fighting for the best system of government in Israel, those devotedly working for the cause of immigration and its absorption, those leading the fight for social welfare and justice, those working for the promotion of the economy—all those among us must be suffused with the strong conviction that all their aspirations and efforts must be subject to the supreme task of this generation and the generations to come: safeguarding Eretz Yisra'el. It is above everything else. [applause] Everything must stem from it. It is the binding framework to which all our decisions, resolutions, and activities must refer.

The need to concentrate on this supreme task stems from the unusual character of Israel's antinational camp. There are oppositions in all countries in the world; they are part of the democratic regime. We, however, stand out among nations on this point as well. We know of cooperation among schools of national thought belonging to different bodies. We know of extremist groups of pacifists, greens, and antinuclear activists who cooperate with fellow ideologists who are citizens of foreign countries. However, we are different. In Israel, there are groups and parties that advocate peace at all costs, which are willing to give up the last shred of national interest for what they term peace. On the other hand, among the Arabs, in all their countries, there are no such groups preaching for peace with Israel. Our peace fighters have no scruples about cooperating with any Arab. Seeing that there are no Arabs seeking peace with Israel, those groups cooperate with the most extreme among our enemies—who preach a Palestinian state, who are conspiring to take Jerusalem away from us, and who condone armed terrorism against Israel. That phenomenon, which stands out in the international political map, calls for more organization and unity, for closing the ranks of the national camp.

Throughout our history we have had to deal with domestic elements who worked against our national goals, but we did not always find the way to prevent the damage they inflicted on us. This time, at this critical period, we must take those elements into account. As I said before, only the Likud can lead the national campaign. Why? I do not object to certain partnerships under certain conditions, when the situation permits or calls for them. Such conditions, however, do not exist today. Only a large and comprehensive movement representing all strata and circles of Israeli society, a movement that does not serve any sectarian or individual interests, a movement capable of talking to any Jew wherever he may be and of finding a common language with all groups and schools of thoughts and with all their variants—on condition that all of them, of course, recognize the priority of the campaign for Eretz Yisra'el—only such a movement is capable of leading the campaign. Only the Likud can do that! [applause]

And let me tell you: For the sake of this unity, it is sometimes worth giving up a detail that has no fundamental significance. Coalitions are part of the Israeli reality, and we do need partners, but we must not forget that important and beneficial partnerships can survive only if the force that steers them is strong, secure, loyal to its goals and principles, and fully and exclusively devoted to the national cause, and to that cause only.

The Likud can lead, and win too, if its leading core is pure, if it serves only its ideals, and if it serves as a model for the entire people. There is another rule that we must bear in mind these days: The national camp must take firm and consistent action to achieve peace. [applause] The people must be convinced that those they have entrusted with the national steering wheel wholeheartedly feel that it is their mission to bring peace to the nation. Our rivals should not be allowed to instill in them the false thought that the Likud does not want peace and strives only for war. That is a lie! We must prove that to the people, through our actions day and night, by persevering in our search for a way to peace. The Israeli people, who have suffered and sacrificed such a great deal, deserve and are entitled to peace, to real peace. We, the representatives and servants of the Israeli people, must bring to our brethren in Eretz Yisra'el the yearned-for peace with our neighbors! [applause]

Etched in the hearts of our loyal emissaries, who represent the State of Israel correctly and wisely, when they went to Madrid and to Washington, was the precept: Watch over Eretz Yisra'el and bring peace. Our envoys did their job faithfully and will continue to do so with talent, wisdom, discernment, good spirit, and the utmost sincerity. Today, too, let us wish them, those dedicated emissaries, that the God of Israel and the Israeli people will continue to stand by them in their holy mission for Israel's well-being! [applause]

Central Committee members, the justice of our way and ideology stands out today more than ever, following the collapse of regimes in Eastern Europe, the end of communism, and the destruction of old symbols. Among other things, the Soviet Union collapsed because it was left devoid of any ideological substance. Look at our political rivals, their confusion, their desperate searches, their attempts to adjust to inevitable changes. Each morning they fly new flags and ideas, and each evening they lower those flags and start rummaging for new ideological bargains, looking for explanations and justifications for their past positions and their new current positions. The people should not trust them, the spineless people of the past and of false magic formulas. Legitimate differences of opinion among us must not play into the hands of those who are ready to give away

parts of Eretz Yisra'el; those ready to abandon Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza; those willing to act in the service of alien, hostile elements.

Let us remember and remind everybody, time and again, of the great achievements of the Likud government. The peace process has begun and is now at its height; Eretz Yisra'el is gradually being built in the north and the south, in the west and the east; settlement is expanding and taking root; Ethiopia's Jews were rescued in the glorious Operations Moses and Solomon; aliyah continues, even in the face of difficulties. Let us not forget that only two or three years ago, if we had been told that some 10,000 immigrants would be arriving here in one month, nobody would have believed it. They come here and are absorbed, some with ease and some with difficulty, but all of them will sooner or later have houses and jobs! [applause]

Our international relations and Israel's stature among the nations of the world have improved beyond recognition. Relations have resumed with many countries. Esteem for Israel and its government, which steadfastly watches over its interests, has increased, as reflected in the repeal of the UN resolution equating Zionism with racism. Zionism is once again on the rise, and false theories are on the decline. Let us work together to reinforce those trends, which are the direct result of the Likud's rule. Let us see to it that the Likud is proud of itself and of its achievements, and goes on bringing more and more achievements to our country in all these fields. This is in our hands—members of the Likud and its representatives in the government, the Knesset, and the local authorities—and this is the responsibility we must shoulder.

Dear friends, one of the points on the agenda and voting order of this session is the endorsement of the Likud constitution. I know it is not easy for a body that has existed for so many years to decide on a constitution, but circumstances have brought us to the point where we must today decide on this simple matter, without which no political body can exist. I know that the members of the Constitution Committee have made every possible effort to prevent and overcome disputes and to come up with a document acceptable to all. Regarding those disputed issues that were brought before the committee, it was decided not to hold a debate and a vote on those issues today. That is why I ask the members of the Central Committee to endorse the draft constitution presented to them today. If the constitution is not endorsed today, the Likud will run into a maze of problems and difficulties, because the party will be left without a constitution and will be unable to take the actions called for by present circumstances. At this fateful point in time, the Likud should not be denied the tools it needs in order to function. That is why I appeal to the Central Committee members to approve the constitution presented to them.

Dear friends, the rumors and reports in the press—particularly the reports—tell us about an argument in the Israeli political arena, and within the Likud, about the way the prime minister should be elected. Many people, the best and brightest in our midst, have been dealing with this subject, and I would be doing them an injustice if I did not express my opinion. I have examined the issue from two points of view: 1) Will the drastic change proposed serve the interests of the nation and the state? 2) Will that change help the Likud win in the elections or, God forbid, will it do the exact opposite? As far as the electoral reforms are concerned, it is clear to me that there is room for many reforms in the system of government in order to strengthen the country and its institutions. After listening to the views of various experts, some of the best and most erudite political scientists with experience in many countries, I reached the conclusion that the change proposed by those favoring the direct election of the prime minister will not improve the administrative system. On the other hand, there are better and more efficient ways of attaining that goal.

As for the impact of this change on our chances of winning, it is clear to me that it entails a potentially serious danger to our success in the elections—and I will not elaborate on it—and that we might suffer a very grave loss, God forbid. For those two reasons, I recommend that the members of the Central Committee not endorse this change. Instead, I recommend they adopt a series of other proposals which, in my opinion, will lead to the same results we all yearn for: strengthening the government and its ability to function.

Members of the Central Committee, to conclude my remarks today I would like to touch upon an issue over which many of you have been suffering and agonizing. I am talking about the scourge of unemployment afflicting many immigrants and longtime Israelis in underprivileged neighborhoods and development towns. Indeed, in the last few years, we have had to tackle an almost impossible mission. Thank God, hundreds of thousands of immigrants have been coming to our country in the last few years. We have been unable, however, to provide them at once with jobs to help them make an honorable living. In addition to them, the scourge of unemployment has stricken many longtime Israelis, who are an important part of the Israeli social core. We will not put up with this scourge! We are no exception, however; the entire world is stricken by this malaise. Stronger and richer countries have been stricken, but that should be no solace to us. Here we are dealing with brothers who have come from far away to share their fate with us and with brothers who have been living with us for many years and have seen their entire world crumbling down on them. I know that the people in charge of those matters in our economic ministries are doing much to overcome those difficulties. Great strides have been made in the past year, in which we added tens of thousands of jobs; but those are not enough. Many efforts have been made, some of them crowned with success, to raise investments in Israel and abroad in order to create new jobs. This task takes time, however, and the suffering meanwhile continues. I call on all those doing this work to double and triple their efforts to fight

the scourge of unemployment and reduce it to a minimum. That is a top-priority national mission!

Members of the Central Committee, there is a group of people in our midst that, fortunately for us, has been increasing and growing from day to day. That group is exposed to many attacks and threats; to international resolutions as harsh as whistling bullets; to verbal attacks of hate and venom calling for pogroms and murders; and to real attacks with stones, mines, firebombs, and lead bullets aimed at terminating human lives, perpetuating the wasteland, and preventing the people of Israel—the legal owners of Eretz Yisra'el—from settling in their land, our land. Those are the people, our people, who live in Judaea, Samaria, the Gaza District, and the Golan Heights. [applause] You are the emissaries of the people of Israel. Our hearts are with you. God bless you! [applause]

Members of the Central Committee, I opened my address by pointing to the importance of the decisive year we will be entering soon. Our strength and ability to safeguard the integrity of Eretz Yisra'el will be put to the test this year. Our ability to greet the arrival of peace in our country will be tested this year. Our ability to continue the effective absorption of the blessed masses of immigrants, the return of Zion to the motherland, will be determined this year. Our success in strengthening the economy and meeting the need to reduce unemployment will be proven this year. Those are numerous and huge trials. We will pass them if we continue to be united and of one mind in our fealty to the eternal goals of the Israeli people, if we remove from our midst every shred and trace of false dispute, if we respect each other, and if we fulfill the vow each one of us has made with his conscience: to serve our people until the end of our lives, until the last drop of life drains from our veins. Thank you. [applause]

Sharon: Left Aiding 'Leaders of Terror'

TA2312060191 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0500 GMT 23 Dec 91

["Excerpt" from speech by Ari'el Sharon, construction and housing minister, before the Likud Central Committee covention at the Tel Aviv Fairgrounds on 22 December—recorded]

[Text] The danger taking form before our very eyes is that the Israeli left wing is breaking away from our people because of its attitude to Judaism and to Israel's religion on the one hand, and in the way they are drawing nearer to the murderers of our people—the leaders of terror and the intifadah—on the other. They are bringing about the creation of two peoples—in quotation marks—of two Jewish peoples. Who would have believed that the Israeli left would help the leaders of terror battle a democratic Israeli government? The left wing's efforts—as well as those of the Labor Party's leaders—to strike at Israel's elected government naturally lead to pressure on Israel. The pressures on Israel are at our doorstep—thus declares the current administration in the United States. All this bears the seed of great danger, not to the Likud as a political body—the Likud has wide popular support—but to the very existence of the State of Israel.

Reactions From Left, Right Wings

TA2312111591 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 23 Dec 91 p A2

[Report by Gid'on Alon]

[Text] The opposition factions yesterday reacted vehemently to Prime Minister Shamir's and Construction and Housing Minister Sharon's outspoken attack against the left-wing factions at the Likud Central Committee session yesterday.

Knesset Member [MK] Hayim Ramon, chairman of the Labor Knesset faction, said that "Shamir and the Likud have once again revealed their true face, the face of an extremist party, which proves that any difference between it, Ne'eman, and Ze'evi, is merely pretense. Sharon's statements constitute incitement and the bloodletting of the opposition, which represents half the people." He stressed that Sharon had again proved that he despises and ignores the elementary rules of behavior required in a democratic regime.

The CRM [Citizens Rights Movement] and MAPAM [United Workers Party] factions accused Shamir and Sharon of conducting incitement of the most despicable and dangerous kind. They asserted that these statements, which are full of hatred and hysteria, recall remarks made against the government's opponents in the Soviet Union during the dark days of the Bolshevik regime.

"It is ironic that on the day that the evil empire is collapsing over there, it is being established here," they pointed out.

MK Amnon Rubinstein, chairman of the Shinuy movement, said that Shamir's and Sharon's remarks constitute incitement the likes of which has not been heard in any democratic country and which were meant to launch a campaign of violence and intimidation against anyone disagreeing with the Likud's positions.

The Peace Now movement noted that "Shamir and Sharon have launched the election campaign in a way that will lead to more Emil Grunzweigs [reference to Peace Now activist murdered by right-wing supporter during rally in early eighties].

'Eran Hayyat, the movement's spokesman, reported yesterday that several Peace Now leaders had received telephone threats saying: "Traitors, we have put out a contract on you," and "You will meet the same fate as Emil Grunzweig."

MK Ge'ula Kohen (Tehiya) said it was not enough to define those collaborating with the enemy as the antinational camp but that investigations on charges of aiding and abetting terrorist organizations should be launched

against MK's who plant trees behind which to hide, in honor of the intifadah murderers.

Levi, Sharon on Electing Prime Minister

TA2212173091 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1600 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] Addressing the Likud Central Committee, Deputy Prime Minister David Levi harshly criticized the Likud institutions, which do not convene, do not conduct debates, and do not hold consultations. He said that instead of having the constitution legislated by an elected body, the Central Committee is presented with a patchwork that is certain to create a void in the Likud's operations. The proposed chapters of the constitution, he said, have no equal in other democratic movements, and in March 1992, the party will reach a dead end.

David Levi went on to express support for the proposed law for the direct election of the prime minister, saying he is sorry that the Central Committee will resolve the issue without holding an in- depth discussion.

Minister Sharon, who opened the Likud Central Committee convention, devoted a part of his remarks to an attack on the Israeli left wing which, according to him, aids terrorist leaders' struggle against Israel's democratic government. He also said that the Labor leaders are making efforts to harm the government and inviting pressures on Israel.

On the Likud issues, he criticized the fact that the Central Committee holds only infrequent conventions. He called on the forum to support the proposed law for the direct election of the prime minister.

Three Detained Lebanese Released to Red Cross

TA2112101591 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] A short while ago Israel released the three Lebanese an IDF [Israel Defense Forces] unit apprehended yesterday morning north of the security strip. This was reported by our correspondent Hayim Hecht. Already yesterday military sources had announced that the three would be released if they are found to be not guilty of collaboration with terrorists.

Lebanese sources have reported that the IDF unit wanted to capture Hizballah commanders but failed because it had collected unreliable intelligence information. As a result, it captured a butcher from Jibshit and two journalists who run a cable television station in al-Nabatiyah instead.

This morning, as we said, the three were handed over to the International Red Cross in the security zone, from where they were transported to the crossing point near Tibnit.

Operation Meant To Deter Hizballah

TA2212053891 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0500 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] has completed an initial debriefing on the operation in which three Lebanese residents were captured two days ago north of the security zone. The debriefing indicates that the soldiers performed well.

A senior officer told our army affairs correspondent Karmela Menashe that originally there had been no intention of kidnapping Hizballah leaders. According to him, the commander on the scene followed his own judgment when he decided to apprehend the three for questioning. The officer noted that the operation was meant to deter the Hizballah and warn the villagers of Jibshit against cooperating with the organization.

[A related report on Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0505 GMT on 22 December adds: "The IDF spokesman reported that there is no linkage between this operation and the matter of the Israeli MIA's and POW's and the effort to free them."]

'Intelligence Blunder' Denied

TA2212124791 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1230 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] Lieutenant General Ehud Baraq, the chief of staff, totally rejects media reports that there was an intelligence blunder during the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] operation in Lebanon on Friday, during which three Lebanese civilians were taken to Israel for questioning. The three have since been released. The IDF spokesman reported that the Friday operation, which constituted part of varied IDF operations to sabotage and disrupt terrorist activity from Lebanon, shows the terrorists that the IDF operates in their staging bases outside the security zone.

Moscow Ambassador Aleksandr Bovin Arrives

TA2212090791 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0700 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] Aleksandr Bovin, the new Soviet ambassador-designate, will meet the Foreign Ministry director general and other officials for a first working session in an hour. Bovin arrived in Israel from Egypt last night, and tomorrow he will present his credentials to President Herzog.

Our correspondent Gid'on Remez notes that Bovin's letter of accreditation is written on behalf of the USSR and signed by President Gorbachev and that Bovin is not presenting himself as the Russian ambassador or the representative of the new commonwealth.

For many years, Bovin served as an adviser to the Communist Party Central Committee, was a political

commentator in the government organ IZVESTIYA, and was among the first to advocate the reestablishment of ties with Israel.

Presents Credentials

TA2312100191 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 23 Dec 91

[Text] Aleksandr Bovin, the Soviet Union's first ambassador to Israel since relations were severed in 1967, presented his credentials to President Herzog this morning. The letter of accreditation was signed by Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

Our correspondent Gid'on Remez pointed out that the Soviet flag was flown and the Soviet anthem played at the ceremony at the president's residence. The president, however, noted that Mr. Bovin had told him that on 1 January he would become the Russian ambassador to Israel. The president said that he had relayed several appeals to establish relations with Israel from the presidents of former Soviet republics to the Foreign Ministry. Foreign Minister David Levi said that contacts were under way on establishing such relations, and our correspondent reports that apparently the republics that have shown the most interest in this issue are Ukraine, Georgia, and Kirghizia.

Yeltsin Says Russia To Establish Ties

TA2012204391 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 2000 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Text] Russian President Boris Yeltsin has announced that Russia intends to establish diplomatic ties with Israel. He was replying to a question from our Rome-based correspondent Yosi Bar.

Yeltsin, currently on a visit to Britain [as heard], said he believes that ending the state of separation between the two countries will be instrumental in solving complex problems, including that of the Middle East.

Yeltsin's spokesman, Voshchanov, told our correspondent that there is no reason to replace Ambassador-Designate Aleksandr Bovin. He added that, as of 1 January, all Soviet Embassies throughout the world will come under Russian control.

Body at AUB Morgue 'Could Be' Colonel Higgins

NC2212222791 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 2216 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] AFP has reported that the American University in Beirut [AUB] hospital has received a mummified body which could be that of Colonel William Higgins, who was kidnapped in Lebanon in 1989.

The forensic doctor who examined the body, Dr. Ahmad Harati, said the body was covered with bandages and cotton. The face had undergone an initial mummifying process.

AFP cited hospital sources as saying that the hospital received the body yesterday afternoon from the police units of Burj al-Barajinah.

Buwayz: No Treaty Before Israeli Withdrawal

NC2212094191 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0915 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz announced that Lebanon refuses to sign any agreement or treaty before Israel withdraws from its territories. In an interview published in Abu Dhabi today, Buwayz said that Lebanon will not attend the third stage of talks before the more important issue of regaining Arab rights is achieved.

Buwayz criticized the UN General Assembly's decision to repeal the resolution equating Zionism with racism.

Karami on 'Very Difficult' Economic Situation

NC2112111891 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0545 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] In an interview today, Prime Minister 'Umar Karami said he was not pessimistic, adding that the economic and financial situation is very difficult. Spending still surpasses revenues and profits on loans are astronomical. There are great dangers in this continuing. Attention must be paid to improving the economy.

Asked whether the United States is serious about helping Lebanon implement UN Security Council Resolution 425, Prime Minister Karami said: After negotiating strenuously, the United States has given us written assurances which are merely ink on paper. It is important that these are implemented practically.

On citizens' view of the government, Prime Minister Karami said: There is great unfairness here, especially since we were accustomed to corruption in previous eras. During [former president] Amin al-Jumayyil's era there were transgressions and violations. People got used to accusing, so every action, no matter whose, causes speculation that there is a deal or commission behind it. He added: Accusing without proof and through the media creates a gap between officials and the people. Here lies the danger.

'Hizballah Leaders' Reportedly Target of Israel

NC2012123391 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1145 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Text] Despite the conflicting reports received from the south, it is certain that the Israeli forces carried out at dawn today an operation against Hizballah, during which it detained approximately eight people and transported three or four of them to Israel. The Israeli commando unit left an explosive charge in the place of the operation in Jibshit which went off at 1130 today, killing Marwan Kasrawani and 'Abd Kamil Nahhal—the latter is believed to be one of those released by the Israeli unit following the operation—and injuring seven others. At noon, the Israeli forces released Muhammad Ishbanah. A look at the details:

Our correspondent in the south cited Hizballah sources as saying that a group of Israeli commandos last night laid in ambush on the Jibshit-'Adshit road. The commandos then stopped a group of six citizens passing by and transported three of them to Israel by helicopter. The correspondent cited the same sources as saying that the operation targeted Hizballah leaders. The correspondent noted that a meeting on the leadership level was scheduled to be held at the operations site.

Further on Explosion After Operation

NC2012124891 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Excerpts] When the issue of the American hostages held in Lebanon has been resolved and when Lebanon and the Arab states have made maximum concessions in the current peace efforts as an expression of goodwill and to promote greater rapprochement and calm in the region and the world, the Israeli occupation forces surprised the south today with a new kidnapping operation in the al-Nabatiyah area, using helicopters. When they withdrew at dawn today, the occupation forces left behind three people dead and four wounded. This is in addition to three people whom they kidnapped and taken by helicopter to inside the occupied border strip. [passage omitted]

At 1100 today, a number of residents gathered at the site of the Israeli operation. An explosive charge, maliciously left behind by the Israeli enemy in order to inflict the highest number of casualties, went off. The explosion led to the martyrdom of 'Abd Kamil Nahhal and Rabi' Kasrawani. Wafiq Bahjat and Kamal Nahhal were taken to the al-Najdah al-Sha'biyah hospital in al-Nabatiyah in serious condition.

Security sources said that the Lebanese Army has adopted strict security measures in the Jibshit area as a precaution.

Shaykh Ahmad Talib, the imam of Jibshit, today called for the establishment of popular security committees in the southern villages to protect the people against the inhuman actions of the Israeli enemy.

Amal Official Comments

NC2012132091 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Report by NNA correspondent 'Ali Dawud in al-Nabatiyah—live]

[Excerpts] [passage omitted] The NNA [as heard] visited Ansar and met with released resident Muhammad Shibbini, who related the incident [Israeli operation in al-Nabatiyah]. He said: As we were returning from a visit to a friend in al-Qusaybah and upon arriving at the 'Adshit-Jibshit road, we were surprised with spotlights and a checkpoint. For a moment, we thought they were members of the Lebanese Army. But when they asked us to step down from the car in a heavy accent, we knew that it was an Israeli checkpoint. They chained us and asked us to lie down on the ground. They then asked us to walk with them for about 10 meters. They asked us various questions. At 2230, when the commando force left the area, the soldiers asked us to remain where we were and not to move, or else we would be fired on. At 0030 today, when we felt that the Zionists had left the area, we left for the neighboring villages and then moved to Ansar.

It should be recalled that the Israelis took with them Shawqi Fahs, Hasan Zuhur, and Kamil Nahhal. [passage omitted]

Lawyer Milhim Qansuh, the Amal Movement's information official in the south, held a news conference at the movement's office in al-Nabatiyah, in which he said that this new aggressive action constitutes a condemnation of Israel and a serious violation of the south's sovereignty, security, and the safety of its people. It is part of the open war which Israel has launched in the form of shelling, kidnapping, and killing of peaceful people in an attempt to undermine the steadfastness of our people in these fateful conditions. This recent aggression, which comes simultaneously with the shelling of the villages of Majdal Silm, Qabrikha, and Tulin, manifests the enemy's terrorist course.

Lawyer Qansuh called on the government to raise the issue of these repeated aggressions against the south at the highest information and political levels and to exercise the greatest pressure to bring about the release of all the detainees. He also called on the state to work for strengthening the capabilities and positions of the Lebanese Army in the area to enable it to stand in the face of all the Israeli challenges.

Israeli Shelling of Irish Position Reported

NC2312104891 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1015 GMT 23 Dec 91

[Text] In the south, UN Interim Force in Lebanon [UNIFIL] spokesman Timor Goksel said that the elements of a position manned by the Israeli occupation forces and the South Lebanese Army in the western sector fired two shells at 0100 today. One shell hit a UNIFIL Irish contingent position in al-Tiri and the other struck a house located 300 meters away. The shelling did not result in any casualties.

Israeli Forces Reportedly Kidnap Lebanese Soldier

NC2112123191 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1223 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] Our correspondent reports that the Israeli forces crossed the security zone in the direction of the town of Kafr Tibnit a short while ago, coming within 1 km of Lebanese Army positions in the area. The Israeli forces then retreated for 500 meters, but still remained outside the security zone.

Our correspondent notes that an Israeli military helicopter is flying over the area, adding that the Israeli forces' advance has caused confusion in Kafr Tibnit.

We have been informed that the Israeli forces kidnapped Lebanese Army Private Amin Yasin from Kafr Tibnit.

Military Source Denies Soldier Kidnapped

NC2112171091 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] At 1230 today an enemy patrol comprising 10 soldiers entered the eastern quarter of Kafr Tibnit and then withdrew half an hour later aboard two military helicopters to the Tallat 'Ali Tahir.

A Lebanese military source confirmed this, but denied reports carried by some media that the enemy force kidnapped a Lebanese soldier.

Resistance Claims 2d 20 Dec Attack on Israelis

NC2112082491 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] In response to Zionist activity in the south, a group of the faithful resistance set off an explosive charge, hitting an infantry patrol of the Zionist enemy and its agents as it traveled between Tuhrah and al-Dabshah yesterday afternoon.

A statement by the operations office of the faithful resistance notes that the attack led to the death or injury of all the patrol members. The enemy army then raked the outskirts of Kafr Rumman and al-Nabatiyah with gunfire.

According to security reports, two Israeli tanks entered Kafr Rumman from al-Dabshah and combed the town for 15 minutes.

Army To Deploy in Villages Near Tayr Dibbah

NC2212110891 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1015 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] Finance Minister 'Ali al-Khalil inspected the Tyre Port today. He announced that the Lebanese Government has received information from the United Nations stating that the Lebanese Army will be deployed in several villages near Tayr Dibbah alongside the UN Interim Force in Lebanon. He explained that this step is part of the attempt to implement UN Security Council Resolution 425 which provides for bolstering legitimate authority and establishing it over all Lebanese territories.

Dayr Siryan Residents Urge Lifting of Siege

NC1912133691 (Clandestine) Voice of the Mountain in Arabic to Lebanon 1230 GMT 19 Dec 91

[Text] The siege on Dayr Siryan continues for the third day running by the Israeli occupation forces. The residents have called on humanitarian organizations to lift the siege of the town, which is now suffering a sharp shortage of foodstuffs and medicine.

Delegation Returns Home; Talks Viewed

JN2212221491 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2125 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] The Syrian delegation to the Washington talks on peace in the Middle East, led by Muwaffaq al-'Allaf, returned to Damascus this evening. Upon arrival at Damascus international airport, the delegation was received by Assistant Foreign Minister Yusuf Shakkur.

Muwaffaq al-'Allaf, head of the delegation, made a statement to a SANA correspondent on the progress of the talks and the climate that prevailed during them. He said: The Israeli delegation did all that it could to obstruct any serious discussion. However, we managed to embarrass it on several occasions, especially in relation to some myths that it used to circulate about Arabs to the effect that they are not serious about peace.

Al-'Allaf added: We have proven to world public opinion in general, and to the U.S. public opinion in particular, that there is a serious, proven desire on the part of Arabs for peace. The cosponsors of the conference and the international community, except for Israel, attest to this fact.

Al-'Allaf said: Throughout the past 20 years preceding the June aggression in 1967, Israel was the one to carry out aggression. [sentence as heard] We have presented a large number of Security Council resolutions, as well as other resolutions of the Syrian- Israeli Joint Armistice Committee, that condemn and denounce Israel, and we challenged them to cite one resolution or any testimony by international observers and neutral quarters to the contrary.

Al-'Allaf said: The Israeli delegation was unable to cite a single piece of evidence during the whole session. He added that the press and the media had said that the Syrian delegation had proven once and for all that the Golan, to the contrary, was the object of Israeli aggression.

Al-'Allaf stated that Israel had tried to exploit the UN General Assembly's adoption of a resolution repealing a previous resolution that equated Zionism and racism under these known international circumstances to say that the Arabs, especially Syria—which voted against the repeal—are not serious about peace.

He added: We have said before that repealing the resolution does not mean that Israel has canceled racist laws and practices. We cited as evidence a resolution adopted by the General Assembly itself under similar international circumstances on 9 December, which condemns Israeli practices in the Golan, deems its occupation of the Golan illegitimate, and condemns its practices against Arab citizens in the occupied Golan.

Al-'Allaf added: We also cited what Israel did, even during the peace conference, whether in Madrid or Washington—the raids on southern Lebanon, the setting up of new settlements in the occupied territories, and the imposing of a curfew on Arab citizens—to prove to the whole world that Israel is pursuing its racist policy and that repealing the resolution now does not mean that Israel has managed to escape this stigma.

He added: We have said that had Israel indeed changed its policies since the resolution was adopted 16 years ago, maybe we would have been the first to welcome the repeal of the resolution. It then would be the outcome of rectifying Israeli policy and the abandonment of its racist policy. However, he added, evidence regrettably indicates that Israel is persisting more and more in its racist policy.

Nonparticipation in Multilateral Talks Urged

JN2212133091 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1200 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] On the eve of the 12th summit conference of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] countries, due to be held in Kuwait, Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam urged the Gulf states not to participate in the multilateral talks scheduled to be held in Moscow late in January unless substantial progress is made in the bilateral negotiations between the Arabs and Israelis. Khaddam's appeal came a statement published today by the Qatari newspaper AL-RAYAH.

It is well known that the Syrian stand expressed in 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam's statement is based on the need to achieve tangible progress in the bilateral negotiations between Israel and the Arab countries bordering it before starting the multilateral negotiations.

Khaddam said Syria hopes that the GCC countries will adopt a resolution supporting Syria's position in particular and the Arab stand in general.

In another development, Khaddam criticized the slow pace of the implemention of the Damascus Declaration, which was signed by Syria, Egypt, and the GCC countries in March. He said: The Damascus Declaration has now become a document in the archives. He expressed fear that it might become one of the documents which was approved by the Arab countries but which was never implemented.

Soviet 'Collapse' Calls For 'Decisive' Position

JN2312085591 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0445 GMT 23 Dec 91

[From the press review]

[Text] In its editorial, AL-BA'TH tackles Israel's insistence on aborting the peace process during the Middle East peace conference in Madrid, and then during the talks held in Washington two weeks ago.

The newspaper says: Israel is determined to abort and obstruct all the efforts and stages that have been accomplished in this respect. AL-BA'TH stresses that Israel will never change, in any way, its intransigent positions

which reject peace, adhere to the occupation of the Arab territories, and ignore the national legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

AL-BA'TH says that Syria has been the only Arab and international party that realized the reality of the Zionist game, and which warned, and is still warning, against the dangers and results of the Zionist maneuver. It stresses that the peace which the Arab nation aspires for, is the just and comprehensive peace that leads to the liberation of all occupied Arab territories and the restoration of all usurped Arab rights.

AL-BA'TH notes that from the outset, Syria has stressed the importance of forging a clear Arab position that abides by the national and pan-Arab constants concerning the Palestine question and the Middle East crisis and that can confront all forms of Zionist maneuvers and conspiracies with the aim of maintaining the nation's interests and rights. It emphasizes that reaching such a decisive Arab position, particularly after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the results of this on the entire international situation, has become a necessary and urgent requisite in order to consolidate the Arab front. It is even a basic condition to safeguard the peace process from collapsing as a result of the Zionist maneuvers.

It can never be ruled out that Israel may exploit the current international changes in order to sabotage the peace efforts and provide a cover for its destructive policy which is hostile to peace.

Concluding its editorial, AL-BA'TH says that the world, especially the United States, bears an ethical, legal, and moral responsibility through putting an end to the Israeli intransigence and facing its provocative policy before the international community loses the initiative and all the efforts made so far toward reaching a practical formula for the realization of just and comprehensive peace in the region go in vain.

Al-Shar': U.S. Pledged To Help Achieve Peace

JN2012191791 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1900 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Text] In Paris, commenting on the end of bilateral talks in Washington between Israel and the Arabs without any results being achieved, Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' noted the role America will play in emerging from the impasse in the talks. In his statement to the French newspaper LE MONDE, al-Shar' said that the United States pledged and gave assurances to help the parties achieve peace. Al-Shar' added that the Arab delegations agreed to return to Washington on 7 January, meanwhile, the Israeli delegation, so far, is not committed to any date or venue for the talks, because, as al-Shar' said, it is obvious that Israel does not seek peace; it is only trying to gain time.

U.S. 'Negative Attitude' Toward Peace Criticized

JN2212151791 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0815 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] Damascus, 22 Dec (SANA)—The newspaper AL-BA'TH discusses President Bush's statement that the results of the Arab-Israeli talks in Washington were disappointing and that the Israeli settlements in the occupied Arab territories are an obstacle to peace.

The paper links the U.S. President's statement with that of the Israeli prime minister, who said that Tel Aviv refuses to stop the settlement building, claiming that there is no connection between settlements and the peace process. The paper says: Israel refuses to discuss the land-for-peace principle on which the U.S. peace initiative was based.

In its comment today, the paper draws attention to the fact that the U.S. Administration is adopting a negative attitude toward Israel's evasive practices vis-a-vis the peace process. It says: It seems that this administration is not ready to take any stance that will disturb Israel even if the latter blows up the entire peace process.

The paper regrets that the U.S. Administration has awarded Israel by pressuring the world into repealing the UN resolution which considers Zionism a form of racism. The paper states: This represents a contradiction in official U.S. positions. While the U.S. Administration is accusing Israel of disrupting the peace process, it is at the same time encouraging it to continue its policy—a policy based on the total rejection of a just and comprehensive peace.

Concluding, the paper says: The peace process, which has begun, requires sincere handling as well as commitment to international legitimacy and UN resolutions. Otherwise, it will be hard to predict what might happen.

Al-Shar' on Postponed Dumas Visit, Relations

JN2012175191 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1720 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Text] In Damascus, following the postponement of a visit by French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas to Syria, Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' criticized the French position, and stressed the absolute desire of his country to bolster relations with France.

The minister urged Paris to take into consideration that its interests with the Arab world are much greater than those it is has with Israel.

He added that moral standards also make it logical for France to become closer to the Arabs than to Tel Aviv. Al-Shar' criticized the attention which Paris gives to the issue of the Nazi minister [Alois] Brunner, and described speculation as to his presence in Damascus as false.

After pointing out that the presence of Syrian forces in Lebanon is very different from the presence of the Israeli forces, which are occupying south Lebanon, al-Shar' said

that the al-Ta'if Agreement calls for the presence of Syrian forces, while UN Resolution 425 demands an immediate end to the Israeli forces' presence in Lebanon.

His exclusive statement was given to the French newspaper LE MONDE, and will appear in tomorrow morning's edition.

French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas' visit to Damascus, which was due to be held this past Wednesday [18 December], was postponed indefinitely at the last moment.

Iraqi Opposition Leader Meets al-Asad

JN2212174591 Damascus SANA in Arabic 1718 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] Damascus, 22 Dec (SANA)—President Hafiz al-Asad received a delegation from the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq led by Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, head of the Assembly, at 1130 today.

Discussion centered on current developments in the region, the situation in Iraq, and the Iraqi people's suffering due to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and their struggle against the tyranny of the Iraqi regime. The latter has caused the heaviest damage to Iraq, its economic and military capabilities, and its Arab and international status, as well as affecting the overall Arab situation.

Announces Plan 'To Save' Iraqi People

JN2312130091 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1235 GMT 23 Dec 91

[Text] Damascus—Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, head of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq [SAIRI], has announced a draft political plan to save all sectors of the Iraqi people from the tyranny and repression of the Iraqi regime.

At a news conference in Damascus at noon today, which was attended by a crowd of media representatives from Arab and foreign television, radio, news agencies, and press, Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim said that this draft plan will be discussed with all the Iraqi opposition parties and forces that have expressed an interest in it. He said that the plan is based on a formula of effective coordination, integration, and cooperation with the Arab and Muslim forces—particularly the opposition forces in Iraq—to save the Iraqi people from the destructive perils that endanger them.

Baqir al-Hakim explained that the draft plan stems from several bases represented in the united stands of the Iraqi opposition, the formulation of a political alternative, and the reactivation of the popular uprising in Iraq to build an Iraq where all injustice will be negated, and where equality will be attained for all the sons of the Iraqi people.

Picco Arrives, Says Mission 'Not Over'

NC2112091491 Paris AFP in English 0852 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] Damascus, Dec 21 (AFP)—United Nations special envoy Giandomenico Picco on Saturday said his mission to close the chapter in the Middle East hostage ordeal was not over.

"I am still working on what remains to be done in the region," Picco told AFP a day after his arrival in the Syrian capital.

"I am pursuing contacts with all the parties who can help me," he added.

But Picco refused to elaborate on the nature of his efforts, saying only that he was this week in Tehran for talks with Iranian leaders.

Iran backs the Lebanon-based fundamentalist Hizbullah group which is believed to have influence on kidnappers of Western hostages and missing Israeli soldiers in Lebanon.

Picco has helped release nine Western hostages from Lebanon since August but two Germans are still being held there.

Last week the U.N. envoy travelled to Germany where he had talks with the official handling the case of the German aid workers, Heinrich Struebig, 50, and Thomas Kemptner, 30, who were snatched on May 16, 1989 in south Lebanon.

The Germans are being held by the pro-Iranian Mojahedin for Freedom movement which has close links with the family of two brothers, Muhammad and 'Abbas Hammadi, who are serving heavy prison sentences in Germany on terrorism charges.

Last week, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Mahmud Va'ezi, visited Bonn to discuss the fate of the hostages with German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher.

Va'ezi had promised to work to secure the freedom of the two Germans.

Picco, whose mission began in August, is seeking the release of some 300 Lebanese political prisoners by Israel.

He also hopes to obtain information on the fate of four Israeli servicemen who went missing in Lebanon. One of the men, airman Ron Arad, is believed still to be alive.

Afghanistan

Government Grants Recognition to Soviet Republics

Recognizes Russia, Central Asian States

LD2112175891 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] The prime minister's press office reports to BAKHTAR that a session of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Afghanistan was held under the chairmanship of Esteemed Najibollah, president of Afghanistan. Esteemed Fazl Haq Khaleqyar, prime minister of the Republic of Afghanistan; Esteemed 'Abdol Rahim Hatef, Esteemed 'Abdol Hamid Mohtat, Esteemed Dr. 'Abdol Wahed Sorabi, vice presidents; Esteemed Khalil Ahmad Abawi, chairman of the Wolasi Jergah [House of Representatives]; Esteemed Mahmud Habibi, chairman of the sena [senate]; Esteemed 'Abdol Karim Shahdan, chief justice of the Republic of Afghanistan; and deputies to the prime minister and members of the cabinet were present. It discussed the issue of official recognition of the Muslim Republics of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation Republic [as heard], and approved the statements of the Republic of Afghanistan in connection with the recognition of those republics.

Esteemed Najibollah, president of Afghanistan, said that the state of the Republic of Afghanistan follows with attention developments in the situation in the Soviet republics. Taking into account the development of the current situation and realities, it requires that within the framework of new developing relations and structures which are being shaped in the independent states of our northern neighbor, the relations of the Republic of Afghanistan with those republics should be ensured and developed based on the national interests of our country. Therefore, the national interests of the country require that within the new structure and by paying attention to the future social and economic development of our people, we should try to use the resources and potential of the new republics based on mutual interests and joint cooperation in the interests of the both sides.

The state of the Republic of Afghanistan believes that on the one hand, by establishing direct political relations with Muslim republics of the Central Asia, the republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Azerbaijan, who have strong economic resources and potential, they can play their necessary role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. On the other hand, it can pave the ground for the activities of Afghan private businessmen and entrepreneurs in the markets of Central Asia and in the republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Azerbaijan aimed at developing the country's national economy.

Esteemed Najibollah added that the state of the Republic of Afghanistan hopes that these relations will develop further based on principles of coexistence, mutual respect, noninterference in internal affairs, and respect for the territorial integrity of each other.

The state of the Republic of Afghanistan as an independent state attaches great, important value to its relations with Russia and the other republics. It wants friendly relations with all world countries, especially neighboring Islamic countries such as the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and the independent states of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenia, and it considers this to be in conformity with its social and economic development and the national interest of its people.

The esteemed president of Afghanistan gave a series of tasks to the government in connection with the development, consolidation, and expansion of political, economic, and cultural relations [with the former Soviet republics].

Further on Russian Independence

LD2112184191 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Statement by the Government of the Republic of Afghanistan—read by announcer]

[Text] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. The state of the Republic of Afghanistan officially recognizes the Federal Republic of Russia [as heard] as an independent state based on the former's foreign peace-seeking policy, and on respect for the rights of self-determination for the nations and the will of the people of Russia to achieve their self-determination.

The Republic of Afghanistan, as an independent state which respects the accepted norms and standards in international relations, which observes the UNO Charter, and which wants friendly relations with all countries based on peaceful coexistence, mutual respect, and noninterference in each other's affairs, believes that the creation of independent relations between the Republic of Afghanistan and the Federal Republic of Russia will further pave the way, based on ancient historical ties, for the expansion and development of existing mutually beneficial relations between the peoples of both countries in various political, economic, scientific, technical, and cultural sectors toward protecting peace and stability in the region and in the world and the attainment of a new international order.

Further on Central Asian Recognition

LD2112182191 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Statement by the Government of the Republic of Afghanistan—read by announcer]

[Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate.

In following the nonaligned and peaceful foreign policy, in respecting the right of nations to self-determination, and in respecting the will of the Muslim and fraternal peoples of the Asian Republics of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan to achieve their self-determination, the Government

of the Republic of Afghanistan is recognizing these countries as independent countries.

In respecting the accepted principles of international laws and in observing the UN Charter, which calls for friendly relations between all countries of the world on the basis of peaceful coexistence, reciprocal respect, noninterference, and respect for the territorial integrity of one another, the Government of the Republic of Afghanistan, as an independent country, believes that consolidating reciprocal advantageous relations in the political, economic, and cultural sectors with the independent Republics of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Azerbaijan, whose interests completely correspond with the those of our own country, and stemming from the policy of nonalignment and independent judgement by our people, will assist peace and stability in the world and in our country and [believes that these relations] can further grow, broaden, and consolidate on the basis of reciprocal interests.

In consideration of the development of the situation, existing realities, and in relying on the profound ties of common Islamic beliefs with all Islamic Asian republics, as well as the past historic and cultural ties with the peoples of the aforementioned republics which from long ago linked themselves with us, as coexisting with common belief and close friends, the Government of the Republic of Afghanistan is expressing the opinion that we can create a firm foundation of mutual relations which we have inherited from history, which has made us for a long time neighbors with the Republics of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenia.

The presence of a bright horizon and enormous potentials for the continuation and broadening of joint economic, scientific, technical, and cultural cooperation on the basis of common interests, and the further strengthening of the existing good understanding in securing further stability in the whole regional situation, are essential needs for the strengthening and consolidation of relations between the Republic of Afghanistan and the aforementioned Islamic Asian republics. The Government of Afghanistan, in recognizing these republics, gives the assurance that it will spare no effort to safeguard peace and stability in the region and to further strengthen and consolidate friendly relations with them in all of their dimensions.

Homeland Party Supports Measures

LD2112224291 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] The press office of the Central Council of the Homeland Party reported that the session of the Executive Board of the Central Council of the Homeland Party was held this afternoon under the chairmanship of Esteemed Najibollah, chairman of the Homeland Party and president of the Republic of Afghanistan.

The Executive Board of the Central Council of the Homeland Party considered and assessed the recent developments in the republics of the Soviet Union and in consideration of the profound Islamic, historic, cultural, and economic ties approved the action of the Government of the Republic of Afghanistan regarding the recognition of the independence of the Central Asian Muslim-populated republics of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenia. The Executive Board of the Central Council also fully endorsed the decision of the Government of Republic of Afghanistan regarding the recognition of the Muslim-populated republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Azerbaijan.

The executive board also expressed support for the decision of the Government of the Republic of Afghanistan regarding the recognition of the independence of the Republic of the Russian Federation. It emphasized the maintenance of traditional friendship and long-lasting good relations between the two countries.

The session of the executive board comprehensively considered the circumstances of the existing dimensions of relations between the Homeland Party and political parties, organizations, and sociopolitical movements in these republics. It commissioned the presidency of the executive board to use all possible means for the further broadening, deepening, and consolidating of cooperation relations of the Homeland Party with political parties, organizations, and sociopolitical movements of these countries.

The executive board also considered a series of issues relating to the party and the country and made necessary decisions.

Russian Vice President Rutskoy Arrives 22 Dec

BK2212143891 Hong Kong AFP in English 1423 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] Kabul, Dec 22 (AFP)—Russian Vice President Aleksandr Rutskoy arrived here Sunday at the end of a three day tour of Pakistan for talks with Kabul leaders aimed at winning the release of Soviet prisoners of war held by Afghan rebels.

Rutskoy arrived on an Ilyushin plane shooting flares against possible rebel ground-to-air missiles some seven hours behind schedule from Islamabad where his talks with Pakistani leaders opened new areas of bilateral co-operation between the two states.

His Kabul visit ends an official tour of Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan and officials here said he would make an overnight halt for talks with President Najibollah and other leaders in Kabul.

"His visit is primarily aimed at urging Najibollah's government to release mojahedin guerrillas from prison in exchange for Soviet POWs held by the rebels," a Foreign Ministry official said.

He added that economic and political cooperation would also figure on the agenda of the talks.

Some 300 Soviet soldiers fighting in Afghanistan were listed as missing in action during the 1979-1989 Soviet occupation, but officials say the mojahedin appear now to be holding only some 30 to 50 POWs.

In Islamabad, Rutskoy, an Afghan war veteran, agreed to wide-ranging bilateral cooperation including contacts between the defence establishments in Russia and Pakistan.

In a statement released at a news conference hosted by the Russian vice president earlier Sunday, it was also announced that the Pakistani and Russian Parliaments would maintain contacts in the future.

"Rutskoy's arrival here will also improve ties between Russia and Afghanistan in many fields," the Foreign Ministry spokesman said.

Soldiers in full battlegear lined the street from airport to Najibollah's palace as Rutstkoy was whisked away in a bullet-prooof limousine amid fears that the mojahedin might launch rocket attacks from the hills ringing Kabul.

Diplomats said they were not invited to greet Rutskoy when he flew in on a landmark visit to Afghanistan where three years ago he had fought as a Soviet soldier against the mojahedin.

"This was a complete departure from protocol," said a senior member of the Kabul diplomatic corps, commenting on the extraoardinay security arrangements.

Rutskoy landed at the same airport from where he had taken off in a Soviet Sukhoy bomber in a combat sortie on August 4, 1988, before being shot down by a Pakistani F-16 fighter over the border district of Miram Shah.

He was later captured by the Pathan fighters on the mountainous frontier. Reports say Pakistan paid a ransom of 2,700 U.S. dollars for his release.

The since disintegrated Soviet Union and the United States have agreed to end their proxy involvement in Afghanistan by deciding to stop arms supplies to the combatants involved in the civil war, which has cost more than one million lives.

Rutskoy's visit comes a day after the Moscow-backed Kabul regime, which seized power in a bloody 1978 communist coup, announced recognition of Russia and the Islamic republics of the disintegrated Soviet Union.

The Najibollah regime, now politically and militarily isolated after the Soviet disintegration, has made overt moves to establish economic ties with the republics.

Rutskoy will also brief Najibollah on proposals mojahedin groups made during his talks with them in Iran and Pakistan, a senior Soviet diplomat here said Sunday.

These groups have reportedly proposed several formulas for a transitional government in Kabul.

Najibollah has repeatedly told his former Soviet mentors that his ruling Watan (Homeland) party cannot be denied its political right to participate in a future ruling coalition.

Holds Talks With Najibollah

LD2212171491 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Excerpts] Esteemed Najibollah, president of Afghanistan, met with his excellency Aleksandr Rutskoy, vice president of the Russian Federation, at the Gol Khana Presidential Palace at 1900 this evening.

The meeting was also attended, for Afghanistan, by Esteemed 'Abdol Rahim Hatef, vice president; Mohammad Eshaq Toki, adviser to the president; and Mohammad Dawud Razemyar, ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of Afghanistan to Moscow; and for the Russian Federation by the delegation accompanying his excellency Rutskoy and his excellency Boris Nikolayevich Pastukhov, the Soviet ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary in Kabul. At the beginning of the meeting his excellency Aleksandr Rutskoy expressed his thanks for the official recognition of the Russian Federation by the Republic of Afghanistan and for the warm welcome shown to the delegation.

During this meeting talks were also held on topics of mutual interest.

According to another report, Esteemed President Najibollah held a banquet in honor of his excellency Aleksandr Ruskoy and the delegation accompanying him in the reception hall of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. [passage omitted]

Russian Vice President Rutskoy and the delegation accompanying him arrived in Kabul this afternoon in order to meet the leadership of the Republic of Afghanistan. They had earlier visited the Islamic Reoublic of Iran and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. [passage omitted]

Mojahedin Attack Strategic Salang Highway

BK2112135691 Hong Kong AFP in English 1323 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] Kabul, Dec 21 (AFP)—Afghan rebels fighting to topple President Najibollah's government have launched fresh attacks on the country's most vital highway, disrupting supplies from the outside world.

Private haulers returning from the Soviet border town of Hayratan with winter supplies said Saturday that the Salang highway connecting Kabul with the outside world was again under attack.

They said the attacks were mostly concentrated in the Kartakah District of Parvan, where many truck drivers have been forced to abandon their vehicles in deep snow because of the fighting, the haulers said.

Military sources here confirmed the fresh fighting on the Salang highway, but said the rebels had failed to cut off

the road which daily funnels hundreds of tonnes of food and fuel for Kabul and other Afghan towns.

The attacks began on private and government convoys after December 15, when Moscow shut an airbridge of military supplies to Kabul, the drivers said. There have been reports that some arms supplies were reaching Kabul by road.

Moscow ended its military supplies to Kabul 15 days ahead of the January 1 arms cut off deadline in a goodwill gesture to the Afghan mojahedin, with whom it is negotiating the release of Soviet prisoners of war.

The latest attacks on the Salang road, which is frequently targeted by the rebels, has led to shortages of food in government stores which cater mainly to officials of Najibollah's administration, the sources said.

"Very many trucks are stranded there and we don't know whether this new fighting will scare away other private drivers from plying on the route," said one official.

Afghan rebels have also launched a new burst of shelling on Kabul.

A child died Thursday when four missiles hit the capital. A day later several military personnel were injured in another rocket attack, reports said Saturday.

Bangladesh

Burmese Forces Attack Post, Kill 1, Wound 7

BK2212103291 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 0130 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] One BDR [Bangladesh Rifles] jawan [soldier] was killed and seven others injured when Myanmar [Burmese] border guards fired on (Retikhara) BDR camp, 8 km south of Ukhia Upazila [subdistrict], in Cox's Bazaar District yesterday.

The injured BDR jawans have been admitted into Christian Memorial Hospital at Dulahazara. The condition of the two injured jawans is said to be critical.

Government Conveys 'Serious Concern'

BK2212162291 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1530 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] Bangladesh has conveyed its serious concern to Myanmar at yesterday's incidents and subsequent developments along the border of the two countries.

The ambassador of Myanmar was called to the Foreign Office in Dhaka today and Bangladesh's position in the matter was conveyed to him. As already reported, one BDR jawan was killed and seven others were injured when Myanmar border guards fired on (Retikhara) BDR camp, 8 km off Ukhia Upazila in Cox's Bazaar District.

The Myanmar ambassador was told that the incidents were in violation of the border agreements of 1978 and norms of friendly [as heard] and good-neighborliness. Myanmar has been asked to take urgent steps to defuse the tension along the border and undertake immediate negotiations to restore peace and tranquillity along the border.

Zia's Party Retains Parliamentary Majority

BK2212041291 Hong Kong AFP in English 0347 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] Dhaka, Dec 22 (AFP)—Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has maintained its parliamentary majority with victory in a keenly contested by-election, poll officials said Sunday.

The BNP candidate for the Barisal constituency, Mujibur Rahman Sarwar, won 42,000 votes against 33,400 for his nearest rival, a candidate for deposed President Hussain Mohammad Ershad's Jatiya Party, the officials said, with the candidate from the opposition Awami League a distant third with some 12,000 votes.

The Barisal constituency was vacated in early October by speaker Abdur Rahman Biswas, shortly before he was elected president.

The BNP maintained its absolute majority of 170 seats in the 330-member parliament, followed by Awami League with 92, and the Jatiya Party with 35.

Soviet Embassy Switches Allegiance to Russia

BK2212111291 Hong Kong AFP in English 1058 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] Dhaka, Dec 22 (AFP)—Ambassador Yuriy Konstantinovich Alekseyev told the Bangladesh Foreign Ministry here Sunday that his embassy was transferring its allegiance to the Russian Federation following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

In a brief meeting with Foreign Minister Mustafizur Rahman, Alekseyev said he and his staff would now represent the government of President Boris Yeltsin.

Shortly after the meeting, the embassy building at Dhaka's Gulshan diplomatic enclave hoisted the tricolour Russian flag, an embassy official said.

The embassy would also represent for the time being other independent republics, staff at the mission said.

India

Soviet Commonwealth Recognized 'in Principle'

BK2312133091 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 23 Dec 91

[Text] India has decided in principle to recognize the 11 Soviet republics which have formed a Commonwealth of Independent States. This was disclosed by the external affairs minister, Mr. Madhav Singh Solanki, while addressing a news conference in New Delhi this evening. He said formal relations with these republics will be

established after assessing the outcome of the meeting of the commonwealth to be held on Monday next.

Welcoming the formation of the commonwealth as a positive development, Mr. Solanki said that direct diplomatic and political contacts have been established with the presidents of the eight republics. These are Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenia, Uzbekistan, Belarus, and Tajikistan.

Republic Presidents Invited To Visit

BK2012093691 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Text] New Delhi has invited the presidents of Soviet republics to visit India. Those invited so far include the presidents of the Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenia, and Tajikistan republics. The external affairs minister, Mr. Madhav Singh Solanki, informed the Lok Sabha that the dates of their visits are being finalized through diplomatic channels.

Russian Flag Raised at New Delhi Embassy

BK2012160491 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Text] The Soviet red flag with sickle and hammer symbolizing communism was lowered at the Soviet Embassy in New Delhi today as it switched over to represent the commonwealth of three republics—Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus.

The Russian Federation's white, blue, and red tricolor fluttered atop the embassy in place of the red flag. This follows a message from the Foreign Office in Moscow to the Soviet ambassador in India.

Minister Notes Soviet Tanks Bound for Pakistan

BK2012090491 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Text] The European Community has urged Pakistan to take effective steps to prevent interference in Kashmir. This was disclosed in the Lok Sabha today by the minister of state for external affairs, Mr. Eduardo Faleiro, today. He said India welcomes this attitude of the European Community and expressed the hope that Pakistan would stop interfering in India's internal affairs.

Mr. Faleiro reiterated that India has taken up with the Governments of Bangladesh and Myanmar [Burma] the issue of training and other assistance being given by these two countries to ULFA [United Liberation Front of Assam] and other militants.

Replying to a question, the minister said that the reports of some Soviet tanks having been shipped to Pakistan by Saudi Arabia are not yet confirmed. These tanks were captured by the U.S.-led coalition forces in Iraq during the Gulf war.

Rao on Visits of PRC, Nepalese Leaders, Tibet

BK2012092291 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Text] The prime minister, Mr. Narasimha Rao, has said that both India and China have agreed to intensify efforts to find an early mutually acceptable solution to the boundary question. Mr. Narasimha Rao told the Lok Sabha today that both he and Mr. Li Peng have agreed to remain in regular contact over the progress of the meetings of the joint working group. If necessary, fresh political signals may be given to officials of the two countries.

After his statement, and later clarifying to points raised by members on the recent visits of the prime ministers of China and Nepal to New Delhi and his participation in the summit of the Commonwealth and G-15 countries, he said the next meeting of the joint working groups will be held as soon as possible, but the military personnel of the two countries in border areas are to meet regularly to sort out local issues.

About Tibet, Mr. Narasimha Rao said the Chinese prime minister indicated that all issues except its independence are open to negotiations with the Dalai Lama.

He said Mr. Li Peng assured him that China does not wish to see conflicts between India and Pakistan and is for a peaceful settlement of all differences between the two countries.

Conveys Concern to PRC on Arms Sales

BK2012162591 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Excerpts] The prime minister has said that both India and China have agreed to intensify efforts to find an early mutually acceptable solution to the boundary question. [passage omitted]

He said India has conveyed its concern to the Chinese side about the supply of sophisticated arms and defense technologies to Pakistan and Islamabad's role in fomenting terrorism and subversion in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir.

About the visit of the Nepalese prime minister, Mr. Koirala, earlier this month, Mr. Narasimha Rao said a durable framework of coopertion has been established which will herald a new era of bilateral relations.

Clarifying certain points in the Rajya Sabha, the prime minister reiterated that bilateral relations between India and Pakistan should be resolved mutually under the Simla agreement.

Iran

President Urges 'Prudent Policy' Above All

LD2012160891 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1130 GMT 20 Dec 91

[First sermon delivered by President Hashemi-Rafsanjani at Friday prayers in Tehran on 20 December—recorded]

[Excerpts] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. [passage omitted] When I last delivered the Friday prayer sermon here I dealt with the need to pay attention to natural factors, divine traditions, and to the law of causation in nature. My remarks remained unfinished. I was to have devoted another sermon to completing the debate. But because today there are ample topics for me to talk about, once again we have to interrupt that debate. God willing, in the next Friday prayer, when I will be at your service, I will complete that debate.

Today, in the first sermon, I will submit to you a brief report on the visit of a delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Africa. Then the second sermon will be on the topics of the day, which are many. I believe it is the right of our people to be briefed on topics that concern them and that relate directly to their revolution; we must report on issues we learned about in our visit. Of course, I cannot offer a comprehensive talk on that topic in this short sermon, but it is possible to talk about it briefly. [passage omitted]

In one of the remote towns of Senegal, named Tuba, we saw that the prophet's family members were extremely popular. Then we wondered how that had come about. We wondered who was there to do this. Well, that is something to do with the prophet's scion.

The same is true of our revolution, in reality. It is an astounding thing. It is a question to which political analysts and those who are experts in propaganda must find an answer. How is it possible? It is a revolution which since its inception has been battered by all the satanic and Zionist and imperialist media; a revolution which has been the target of consistent accusations, slanders, and mendacious propaganda by the ample resources of global infidelity. All along, global infidelity has hidden facts about this revolution, kept silent about its glories and strong points. Even our friends, wherever they are, cannot say much in our favor because they fear being branded as terrorists, fundamentalists, and the like. How is it that a revolution that has suffered so much has succeeded in finding so much recognition in the world? [passage omitted]

The town we visited was Tuba. You must see the town, you must see its people, its alleys and streets, its libraries, its level of culture, you must see that they have not even one single newspaper, you must see the poverty of the peopl—and yet in such a place the people can recognize the face of the president of the republic, the president of the Republic of Iran. And yet it is not all that certain that they can recognize the face of their own president because of the conditions in which they live. [passage omitted]

Despite the fact that the enemies planned to isolate us—and there was continuous mischief against us from the very first instant—suddenly, like a lamp that had been lit, they could not ignore many things. If you hang blinds against the sunlight, you cannot block it. Such was the light of the revolution.

When we were ready to depart for the conference—the night before our departure—we were informed that the atmosphere of the Islamic Conference was under the influence of the conditions of that day and affected by U.S. propaganda. We were told that many of the leaders and great people would not attend. Therefore, I was told to think whether it was suitable for me to go. We said, well, if there is an open and bright atmosphere, there will be no great need for us to go. But because things were the way they were, it was said that we should go. We should go and see. After all, it is a place to work in and we must go there and work. We were there with some friends.

The first thing about which a hue and cry was raised in order to frighten our host was that suddenly there was a rumor that Iran had brought 300 people. We were surprised about how they arrived at this figure. It became clear that they wanted to suggest that we had some inappropriate plans so that a barrier would be raised against us. Our basic delegation consisted of about 20 people. Of course, there were also a number of guards, journalists, photographers, pilots and crew, which are usually required on such trips. And we were surprised by why they were carrying out this mischief. Of course, it turned out to their disadvantage. The whole thing took on a different meaning, that is, in circumstances in which others were indifferent to the conference and did not attend, Iran took part in that splendid way and gave importance to the conference. That was the interpretation that took shape in the region and we benefited from it. We said: Yes, this is a place where we can serve, where decisions can be made; the interests of Islamic countries must be drawn up here. Therefore, we must have a serious presence. This very fact turned to the disadvantage of those people themselves.

There, in the meeting of the Islamic countries foreign ministers, in which the agenda for the conference and the resolution had been prepared, it had been unanimously agreed—without Iran—that the Madrid conference, the Israeli negotiations, would be approved. Not one person was prepared to oppose this except Iran, which formally opposed it. One or two Arab countries were meant to join in the opposition with us, but they were silent. They said our vote is with you, but we cannot say anything ourselves. That was the atmosphere.

We decided that the atmosphere of the conference must definitely be improved in some way. When we talked with a number of leaders and officials—both I and the delegation were active in this regard—we sensed that

their hearts were in a different place from their words; that their understanding pointed elsewhere. I am telling you this seriously: the greatness of the Islamic revolution did the trick. I am one individual, and anyone else would have done the same in my place. It must not be put down to my actions or to those of the accompanying delegation. It must be put down to the foundation of the matter. If we did not have the foundation here, if we were not strong here and our words had no foundation, no one would listen to us. This is why the words of the Islamic Republic matter. It does not matter who utters the words. Our ambassador, a common person—of course, the identity of the person and the manner of speech are not without effect, but the main issue is the revolution itself and other things such as spirituality, righteousness, and justice. Nothing is more cutting than the sword of justice.

History definitely accepts this. Events throughout history show this. Righteousness may be weakened or doubted—such things may happen—however, clear truth is like the sun. [passage omitted]

When we spoke of our position at the Islamic Conference, we did not say anything new. We repeated what we have said a thousand times before at Friday prayers or at other places. [passage omitted]

Anyhow, because of the effect of what was said, from that moment on the conference atmosphere changed. In the meetings I had with the delegations, following the speech, they thanked me sincerely. They said that it was necessary for the words of the world of Islam to be spoken somewhere, and I said them. Some would say that they felt lighthearted; the same ones with whom we are unhappy because they are going to Madrid or whatever. They said that I said what was in their hearts. The words were said in this world forum. And the conference reaction showed that others also believe this. Political exigencies prevent them from saying so. High-level interpretations which do not belong to the diplomatic level: the soul of the party, and the axis of the movement of the conference. Things that are sometimes written in our enemy's papers as well—the same ones which constantly speak against the Islamic Republic, saying they are isolationists, they are fundamentalists, they are terrorists—those who cared to write confessed that from then on the spirit of the Islamic revolution swayed over the conference. Some of the delegates were saying that when we do not attend the conference, the conference seems to be orphaned. This is because we could not attend it regularly; we were busy, attending to other tasks, so sometimes we did not attend it. They confessed. And its tangible result was the final conference statement. I am quite satisfied with the statement.

Now, its main point. Well there are many issues in the statement, basic issues. The point that concerns Palestine reflects our view exactly. They put in the Palestinian rights in an absolute and serious way. They condemned deviating paths. Of course they did not condemn Madrid by name; but because they had confirmed Madrid in their resolution they could not withdraw it. But they made the statement in such a way that it condemns all those misleading, deviating, and humiliating paths; those things that take Jerusalem away from us, those things that trample on Palestinian rights. Nor did they mention the occupied territories. They said categorically that it includes the whole of Palestine—and the conference final statement was set out in such a way that it satisfied us as well. An instance of what all governments accepted unanimously—and it demonstrated the respect with which you are regarded—is that we proposed that we wish to host the next Islamic Conference. Since [Saudi] Arabia had previously proposed this in Turkey and it had been accepted, they could not eliminate them, and since they [the Saudis] had precedence, contrary to conference tradition, they confirmed in this session that the session after nexty must be held in Tehran. It is not usual to schedule two conferences at the same session. The decision was purely to satisfy the Islamic Republic and pay respect to the Islamic revolution.

On the whole, I believe that your revolution has found its place among the people as well as among thinkers. What you hear are political quarrels that exist in the world and the enmity that exists in the heart of world arrogance regarding your popular and Islamic revolution. A great deal of it does not concern us; it concerns Islam. That is, they are really unhappy with Islam. They do not want to accept something that has such a great place in people's hearts becoming the axis for the alliance, unity, and cooperation of more than 1 billion Muslims. This is what they are trying to prevent. And we must endure pressures which, because of Islam, are brought to bear on Islamic communities and naturally affect us too.

From a popular point of view, what you saw in films [of the African tour] was but the tip of the iceberg. The African people, in the two parts that we visited—West and East Africa—the Muslim African masses are really in love with the Islamic revolution. The gathering that we saw in Tuba, and a portion of it was reflected in the films, was more extensive than what was filmed. We were not prepared beforehand to film all the dimensions properly. I was told that they would film from a helicopter. I have no idea. Perhaps they could not do it. One of the military officials asked one of our entourage: What is going on? What have the Iranians done? He said that he has reports that people from across Africa are arriving in Tuba, two or three days ahead, because it had been announced beforehand that the Iranians are coming to Tuba. And the people did not have transportation. They were trying to get there on foot and by the most primitive means to see us. Now, why does this happen?

Sudan is another issue. There is truly an Islamic revolution there. Of course, this has cultural roots. Fortunately, there is no religious fanaticism there as there is in some places. They told us there that they have allowed seven religions denominations to operate in their laws and regulations. The four main denominations of Sunnism, plus Shiism, Zeydiyah and Ebaziyah. They have Islamicized their banks according to our experience and program. They really want

to be Muslims. They really want to follow the Islamic revolution. I don't know whether you have really paid attention to the films. Everyone was holding above their heads whatever they could find of Iran. Old pictures cut out from newspapers, the imam's picture, the leader's picture, pictures of other Islamic Republic personalities that they had managed to find, and the Iranian flag. They could not easily find the flag. Some had sewn together three colored pieces of cloth to have something in their hand linked to Iran. [passage omitted]

In all the scenes we witnessed, people displayed nothing but Islam. People were very interested in Islam, that is, in a country in which a major part of the population is non-Muslim. They are 6 percent Christians, and around 20 percent are apparently animists or idolaters. But their Muslims are very informed, intelligent, and politically up-to-date, but poor and deprived. It is heartbreaking to see their poverty. Of course, they should not be poor. Their people are in such a situation that if they do not work one day, they will be hungry the next.

A large number of these people spent two or three days attending the welcoming ceremonies or on the route we traveled. [passage omitted]

The people of Sudan were imitating you, the same feelings that you have in your ceremonies. They have heard, little by little, on the radio, or have read in papers, or have been told about what Iranian people do, and they are doing the same. What stands out is that they have no fear of their leaders, their spiritual figures, their fellow citizens, or their politicians.

They were openly saying: We follow the Iranian revolution, the revolution of Iran is our model. We have learned from you. We support you. We wish to repeat your experiences.

They were saying that the imam was also their leader. They were saying that the imam does not only belong to you. Those were in their slogans, their formal slogans. Then their television also would report those events. When their television reported the events, it would broadcast our words in Persian, the words of the translator, and also the slogans. The entire event was broadcast.

Well, a country, a revolution. The Sudanese are an ancient people of Africa. Sudan affects 10 neighboring countries. It has teachers in many places, it is the Koran teacher of Africa. They told us that they have 13,000 Koran teaching centers. We saw one of them—around 1,000 men and women were learning the Koran there. Anyway, a country with such a history, would it bow so much toward others, toward another revolution, and tell them: We want to follow your path? They did not feel any shortcoming at all in introducing themselves as the obedient followers of the Islamic revolution. It was an honor and pleasure for us to see that our revolution was viewed like that.

The foreigners may analyze: the Iranians have helped to do this or that. It is a lie. We have not assisted Sudan at all. Before the revolution, during the previous regime, some oil was given to them—the Sudanese cannot afford to pay for it yet. The Islamic revolution has not assisted Sudan yet—some minor assistance was provided that we normally provide to anyone. Recently, the Reconstruction Crusade has started to provide a certain amount of help. We have started this in many African countries. They were not influenced by financial help at all, because there was none. In fact, they were eager, they loved to help our revolution. They know that here lies the mother of all Islamic towns [saying of the Prophet Muhammad on Medina]. They know that this place is dear, this place must be strong—they accept this. Of course, that country must not be so poor—unfortunately it is. The Nile passes through their country, it has 80 billion cubic meters of water, they have vast resources of underground water and the best earth in the world. They have enough light and heat and eight months of rain. But the people are really poor, really oppressed because of the tyranny perpetuated by arrogance and colonialism. Sudan has suffered. There was instability in that country. Of course, it is our duty to help such Islamic countries. They require more spiritual assistance from us, rather than material help.

In any case, be happy that your revolution and the outcome of your jihad has settled on the hearts of a billon, over a billion people in the world—the Muslims of the globe. Even those who are silent accept this deep in their hearts.

The Islamic Republic now needs a prudent policy [tadbir] more than it needs anything else. When we find ourselves in this situation, we need a prudent policy, both for inside the country, in order to strengthen our base, and for our foreign policy, so that we can have a presence and help people without being accused of engaging in terrorism, without anyone being able to call us fanatics. We have no need to speak fanatically. We have no need to chant impractical slogans. We do not need to say things which are not acted upon, needlessly frightening people and blocking our own path.

We need, prudently and wisely, to explain Islam, the Koran, the tradition of the Prophet [Sunnat], and the history of Islam to the people of the world, and to inform Muslims that they, too, can perform their duty; they have found their path and they are following it. We can be the leading light of the world of Islam as long as we act with prudence and wisdom. [crowd chants support] [passage omitted]

Second Prayer Sermon

LD2012195191 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1210 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Second Friday sermon by President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani in Tehran on 20 December—recorded]

[Excerpts] Since the first sermon went on for too long, I will keep my second sermon short. I will raise a few important points. The most important issue is the great victory we

achieved when our righteousness became clear. We were the oppressed party for a while—this will be dealt with in the final part of my talk. [passage omitted]

The issue that made us sad was the martyrdom of our great comrade-in-arms, our martyred [oil] minister, martyr Tondguyan [who was buried on 20 December]. This made us deeply sad. We were waiting to have him among us. Unfortunately we welcomed his body. Of course, there are vague points regarding his martyrdom—these must be cleared up. [passage omitted]

We have the issue of the peace conference, of Madrid. Its second round ended in a humiliating fashion. Nearly all our predictions are, unfortunately, being realized. We did not want our predictions to be correct. We were concerned. We can see that Israel is progressing step by step and the Arabs are regressing step by step. The Zionists happily said: We achieved our objective, the Arabs sat with us, talked to us and accepted us. The Arabs are saying sorrowfully: Israel is being more hostile and proud every day, it is not prepared to talk about land for peace, about the Golan, about Jerusalem. It showed many amazing things: It even made faces at its master, its illegitimate father—America. It decided on the timing of the negotiations. As we can see, there is a feeling of weakness on the one hand and pride on the other. This is a source of shame for the Islamic world. Unfortunately this is continuing. I will continue this discussion in my Arabic sermon; I am addressing the Arabs.

The next point, which mainly relates to domestic affairs, is the revelation that the Islamic Republic was the victim [in the war with Iraq]—thanks to the very good ruling given by the UN secretary general. Of course, he has performed what was his duty. And that too was late. Yet, under the conditions we are experiencing today and taking into account the influence of the arrogant powers in the United Nations, one must in fairness thank such courage and manliness in a person who has said something on his own accord. Most certainly nobody encouraged him to say those things. He restored a right which may well bring in its wake complaints and unfriendly moves against him. Therefore, we must not forget the good manner of thanking such a person who is independent and who says what is right. [passage omitted]

At this point it is an important victory for us, but the work is not finished. It is important, of course, for history, for Islam and posterity to know that Iran was not responsible for so much devastation, for so much bloodshed, so many disabled, and so many problems for the families of the martyrs and the disabled. It is important for the children of Islam to know that Iran was not responsible for the destruction of the economies of the two countries of Iran and Iraq, that Iran was not responsible for the bleeding of the economic body of Iran and Iraq.

That is very valuable. We knew that to be the case; maybe many other people knew it too. However, the judgment of an unbiased and international organization to the effect that the one responsible for shedding all that blood, causing all the damage, misfortune, divisions, weakness in the world of Islam, the one responsible for the presence of arrogance in the region, for the hatreds, for the spirit of vengeance, for the disputes, and the possible subsequent effects—the identification of who was really responsible, that is the really valuable thing.

It is a document that will certainly gladden the hearts of pure Islamic forces throughout the world. They will draw a peaceful breath. They will have a document in their hands with which they can confront those who wish the Islamic Revolution ill. They can show that it was innocent Iran which cried for 10 years "an injustice is being committed against us" and no one paid any attention. They hit our cities and we were forced ultimately to retaliate to stop them.

Fortunately, in this judgment, the secretary general once again raised the chemical [weapons] issue, saying, when we sent a delegation several years ago to Sardasht and to towns in Kordestan, we saw that the Iraqis had used chemical substances there and that civilians had been poisoned. Of course, they had already said this at the time, but now it has been stated in an official judicial document.

Outstanding issues are serious matters which must be pursued. Of course, that too will be very complicated and will need prudent policy and wise action. I must thank here the diplomatic corps of the Foreign Ministry. They have, in all fairness, handled this affair with prudence and in a worthy manner, with the support of the Supreme National Security Council. And the delicate work which was undertaken in our recent historical action, which brought us where we are today, is something about which it is still too early to speak to you. You, too, with your wisdom and understanding will undoubtedly not expect us to explain things any further. But let it be a source of reassurance to you that able, experienced, knowledgeable, and faithful people are serving you, working in international arenas to protect our interests, to prevent injustice and to make up for the injustice committed against us in the past. We hope that we will see further positive effects in the future as a result of those gentlemen's diplomatic efforts. In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. [passage omitted]

Arabic Sermon

NC2312083891 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1115 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Sermon delivered by President Hashemi-Rafsanjani at Friday prayers in Tehran on 20 December—recorded]

[Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Praise be to God, lord of the universe. God's prayers and peace be upon our prophet Muhammad, his scion, and his companions. In the past few weeks the Islamic Nation has followed the news of the Islamic summit in Dakar, the Madrid talks, and the Washington talks. The final communique of the Dakar conference emphasized the need to defend the just rights of the

Palestinian people and denounced all the defeatist initiatives and deviant solutions.

Up to this day it has become clear that the Madrid conference has offered nothing to the Palestinian people. The Zionists have declared that the Arabs have recognized the legitimacy of the Israeli entity by agreeing to negotiate. This is the bitter and painful result the Islamic Republic has warned about since the start of the so-called the peace conference.

We have observed that the Zionists have dealt with the negotiators in their well-known intransigent and arrogant spirit. They have not retreated at all from their aggressive stands and ambitions. They have not even paid attention to the proposals and warnings of their masters and protectors, the Americans. We have also observed how the Americans have been weak and tolerant with their illegitimate daughter Israel, which remains arrogant and inflexible toward the Arabs.

What is strange is that some Arabs are still enduring these shameful and unacceptable conditions. Israel is moving forward step by step while international public opinion, which Arabs have counted on to help them during the negotiations, has remained silent. International world public opinion has not moved and has not shown any interest in all the injustice and aggression that has taken place.

In view of all this, we have no alternative but to accept the advice of the struggling and sacrificing forces in Palestine and the Islamic world and to acquiesce to the will of the people to stop the talks and the peaceful solutions.

I take refuge in God from the condemned satan. In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. Say: He is God, the one and only; God, the eternal, absolute. He begetteth not, nor is he begotten. And there is none like unto him. God's prayers and peace be upon you. [Koranic verse]

Habibi on Recognition of Soviet Republics

LD2312120991 Tehran IRNA in English 0834 GMT 23 Dec 91

[Text] Tehran, Dec. 23, IRNA—Iran will recognize former Soviet republics and upgrade her relations with them, said government spokesman Hassan Habibi here Monday.

Speaking in his weekly press conference, Habibi who is also first vice-president added that Iranian consulate in Baku, capital of the Azerbaijan Republic will be promoted to embassy level and embassies will be opened in five other Asian republics.

According to Habibi, the existing bilateral agreements of the Islamic Republic with the former Soviet republics will be honoured.

Turning to domestic issues, he touched on the fuel shortage throughout the country and put the blame on transportation bottlenecks, consumption pattern and smuggling of oil products to the neighbouring countries.

However, he added, the supply can not meet demand even if refineries throughout the country start operation. He advised the public to revise their consumption pattern.

Summit Termed 'Another Trial' for GCC Leaders

LD2212231991 Tehran IRNA in English 1559 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] Tehran, Dec. 22, IRNA—The forthcoming summit of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (P)GCC in Kuwait is another trial for heads of the six Arab littoral states, said a commentary in the Persian daily JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI Sunday, taking note of the changed atmosphere in the region.

It said the (P)GCC initially styled itself as an economic grouping with less political claims. However, "it did not last long before its unannounced objectives were unveiled, and political and military cooperation among the member states took priority over other issues.

"During the eight years of the Iraqi aggression against the Islamic Republic, the (P)GCC acted as a sworn military, political, economic and propaganda ally of the Baghdad regime, practically launching an undeclared confrontation with the Islamic revolution."

But the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait proved "very bitter" for the (P)GCC, leading to the massive presence of American and other Western military forces in the Persian Gulf region, and revealing many realities for the world and the regional countries.

The daily said that in light of the recent recognition of Iraq as the aggressor party in the 1980-88 war against Iran by the United Nations, "the (P)GCC seems to have to revised its past attitude with respect to the newly-created atmosphere."

That although the Kuwaiti amir referred to Iraq as the aggressor party in war against Iran during the recent OIC [Islamic Conference Organization] summit in Dakar, the commentary asked whether the mere acknowledgment of this fact was enough?

"What answer the heads of (P)GCC states would give to Iran for their past attitude vis-a-vis Iran and the region?"

"What anwsers do they have for the material and spiritual losses inflicted on Islamic Iran and for the devastations caused to the Iranian nation from the Iraqi aggressive war?"

If mistakes are realized then one should immediately rectify them by choosing the advisable path, said the daily and thought that the summit in Kuwait presents "another trial" for the six Persian Gulf Arab leaders.

Kuwaiti Minister Cited on GCC Army Plan

LD2112225991 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 2030 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] The Kuwaiti foreign minister announced that during the 12th session of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] the establishment of a united army will be reviewed by the Council members.

The Kuwaiti foreign minister, in an interview with the Saturday edition of the Qatari newspaper AL-RAYAH, announced the news and added: During that session, which will be held in Kuwait next Monday, the GCC member countries will assess methods of agreement with the Islamic Republic of Iran in political, security, and economic fields so as to provide tranquility and stability in the region within the framework of mutual respect and noninterference in each others' affairs.

On methods of cooperation between the Persian GCC and the Islamic Republic of Iran, he stressed: Various plans have been drawn up in that regard, which will be discussed with Iranian officials at future meetings.

Daily Urges Disclosure of News About Hostages

NC2012125291 Tehran KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL in English 16 Dec 91 p 2

[Editorial: "All the Remains Are Equal"]

[Text] There has been a strong tendency in the Western media to attribute the origin of the hostage taking crisis to the "Iranian- supported" Muslim fundamentalists there and specially the Shiites. But the fact is that Western-supported right wing Lebanese Christian factions initiated the ordeal. Four Iranians with official duties in Lebanon, along with their Lebanese driver, were the first unfortunate victims of this heinous act.

The five employees were abducted in 1983 by pro-Israeli Phalangists at a checkpoint near Beirut. Their fates remain to this day a lingering, painful affair. To put behind the "obstructive" fates of these five hostages and get some dialogue or negotiations going, various Western governments approached Iran to say that the five were killed and that nothing could be done about their case.

With the release of the Western and Arab hostages from Lebanon and Israel—save the two remaining Germans over whose fate negotiations are continuing—the hostage drama is assuming new dimensions with the demands for the return of the bodies of those who died in captivity. Along with Iran, the U.S. and Israel, Britain and Italy have something at stake in the complete resolution of the crisis.

The question of the Iranian hostages—their release if they are alive or their remains if they are dead—was raised earlier this month during a meeting between Iran's UN Envoy Kamal Kharrazi and Secretary General Perez de Cuellar. The UN chief promised to get a final answer on the fates and the whereabouts of the Iranian hostages by the end of the year.

Also last week U.S. President Bush demanded the return of the remains of Higgins and Buckley. Both Beirut CIA bureau chief William Buckley and Marine Lt. Col. William Higgins died in captivity. Higgins was abducted in 1988 and Buckley four years earlier.

As far as Israel is concerned, it is afraid that now that the Western hostage file has been closed, the question of Israeli prisoners will remain unresolved. Israel is also seeking the return of six servicemen missing in Lebanon; either the soldiers themselves or their remains. And to make its point it has linked the fate of Lebanese Muslim cleric 'Abd al-Karim 'Ubayd to that of its missing servicemen in Lebanon.

Neither have the bodies of British writer Alec Collett, who was abducted in 1985 and later reported killed for the British support for the U.S. air raids on Libya, in 1986, or that of the Italian businessman Alberto Molinari, who was kidnapped in 1985, and who died of natural causes in captivity, been returned.

The problem of hostage releases or the return of their bodies will not come to a complete and satisfactory end before all the parties concerned contribute sincerely to its resolution. Iran has taken an active part in the UN chief's mediation efforts for the release of Western hostages. Influence has been used with the Muslim groups in the hope of seeing the West use its weight with the right-wing factions in Lebanon.

The families of the missing Iranians are still looking forward to receiving some concrete news on the fate of their loved ones, just as the families of the hostages from other countries are. Not until the Phalangist groups are compelled to make some revelations on the fate of the missing Iranians, can anybody be hopeful of the complete termination of the hostage saga.

Group Denies Approving Plot To Overthrow Saddam

NC2212101291 Paris AFP in English 0958 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] Tehran, Dec 22 (AFP)—The Iran-based Organisation of Islamic Action (OIA) in Iraq denied Sunday that it had approved a plan by the Iraqi opposition to overthrow President Saddam Husayn.

"Our movement has no role in this project or in any other plan to overthrow Saddam Husayn and there has been no coordination made with us by anyone to overthrow him," OIA spokesman Nizar Haydar told AFP.

He stressed that only the Iraqi people had the right to take decisions concerning their fate.

A key Iraqi opposition figure arrived Saturday in Syria to brief leaders there on plans to topple Husayn, according to a spokesman in Damascus for the Supreme Assembly

of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SAIRI), an umbrella group that includes the OIA.

"(SAIRI leader) Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, who is currently in Damascus, does not speak for the OIA," Haydar said.

Hakim was invited by President Hafiz al-Asad, a spokesman for the opposition group said in Damascus, adding that the SAIRI leader would outline a plan for coordination among regional states to overthrow the Iraqi president.

The spokesman did not elaborate but opposition sources said Iran and Saudi Arabia had drafted the project and that it had been sponsored by the United States.

Rushdie Visit to New York Reported

NC2112164791 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 14 Dec 91 p 2

[Text] The United States transported Salman Rushdie, the writer of the blasphemous book *The Satanic Verses* to its own soil last week.

During a speech arranged for him at Columbia University, Rushdie called on governments to assist in getting the annulment of Imam Khomeyni's decree that makes it lawful to shed the writer's blood.

He suggested that Western governments should make the improvement of ties with Western countries conditional with Iran's annulment of the imam's decree. In his speech, Rushdie said that his life has been very difficult since the decree was issued and he needs assistance to continue his existence.

Once again, Rushdie stressed the need to have a cheaper edition of "The Satanic Verses" published so that all may be able to purchase it.

It appears that Rushdie's visit to the United States and his presence and speech at a public gathering is the beginning of renewed efforts by the West to increase propaganda against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Rushdie has been living in hiding in Britain and this is his first trip outside the UK since the issuance of the decree.

Australia To Share Credit, Technology

LD2212225191 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] The Australian Government has placed $750 million of credit at the disposal of Iranian firms and companies active in mining. Mines and Metals Minister Mr. Mahlujchi, back from his one-week visit at the head of a delegation to Australia, announced this and also spoke about the outcome of his meeting with that country's authorities. He said:

[Begin Mahlujchi recording] Australia's foreign trade minister announced that in order to expand ties with Iran, the Australian Government has placed $750 million of credit at Iran's disposal. We have reached agreement with the BSB Company, which is one of the biggest Australian companies; its technology is advanced and unique in several fields including mining. The agreement is for exploiting the iron ore mines in Sangan in Khorasan province and also for prospecting and extracting Iranian gold resources. On the basis of our information, which was endorsed by them, considerable amounts of this precious metal exist in Iran. They were also interested in setting up a factory for manufacturing steel sheet with a particular coating, different from galvanized iron, that is, a mixture of aluminium and zinc. This technology is unique to that company.

We also reached agreement with the Multiplex company to build tourist facilities such as hotels on Qeshm island. We reached understanding with the geological department there to assist us with drawing geological maps of the northeastern region of Iran, which lacks such maps.

We also reached agreement with their center for expanding universities and higher education establishments. We will send students there to study for higher degrees. They will also assist us in setting up a mining and industrial university, which will become one of the advanced universities of the world. [end recording]

Rafsanjani Thanks Velayati for Resolution 598

LD2112115991 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] The foreign minister, Mr. Velayati, accompanied by several of those involved in following up Resolution 598, met Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani today. At that meeting, the president thanked those who produced this great political victory for the honorable people of Iran through their exacting efforts. He said: Despite the oppression we suffered in the world, the sacred existence of His Eminence the Imam (MN: Khomeyni), the support of the leadership, the strong support of the people, the good defense of the brave and the stability of the system at home and abroad laid the main foundations for this victory, thank God, and led to our diplomacy be able to carry out its task.

The president pointed out: We have achieved a great historic, political, cultural and honorable victory. He continued: It was the people's faith in the system that succeeded.

Stressing that the next phase and the complete implementation of the resolution is very important and that it must be followed through accurately and sensitively with the coordination and cooperation of all concerned forces, he reiterated: God is more aware of our righteousness and suffering than anyone else. He knows that we seek only the truth. Everyone must carry out their task with this very same spirit. God's blessings will be with us.

At the start of that meeting, the foreign minister submitted a report on the successful campaign for Resolution 598 and said: Today, we are proud that through divine blessing, the self-sacrifice, devotion, and blood of the martyrs have come to fruition. We have take a good turn with Resolution 598. We hope to successfully implement further stages.

Pakistan

Further on Visit of Russia's Rutskoy

Calls for Improved Relations

BK2112013891 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0100 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] Senate Chairman Wasim Sajjad hosted a banquet in honor of visiting Russian Vice President Aleksandr Rutskoy in Islamabad last night. Speaking on the occasion, the Senate chairman said that wide prospects exist for promoting bilateral relations between the two countries.

Wasim Sajjad said that the deteriorating human rights situation in Indian- occupied Kashmir is causing concern to the Pakistani people and that the international community should pay immediate attention to this issue. He commended Rutskoy's role in taking a personal interest in finding an early solution to the Afghan problem. Wasim Sajjad said that Pakistan wants the Russian Federation's cooperation in settling this problem so that peace can be established in Afghanistan and millions of the Afghan refugees can go back to their homes in honor, dignity, and safety.

The Russian vice president in his speech said he hoped that the relations between the two countries will be further strengthened in the years to come. Aleksandr Rutskoy expressed the desire that the Kashmir issue should be solved immediately for lasting peace and stability in the region.

Sincerely thanking Pakistan for according recognition to his country, he announced the conversion of the Soviet Embassy in Islamabad into the Russian Federation Embassy, and he appointed Soviet Ambassador Viktor Yakunin the Russian Federation's ambassador.

Earlier, Aleksandr Rutskoy called on the Senate chairman and discussed bilateral relations and matters of mutual interest, including Kashmir and the Afghanistan problem.

Expresses Desire for Cooperation Accord

BK2112160691 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] The Russian Federation has expressed its willingness to sign an accord on friendship and cooperation with Pakistan. This decision was conveyed in a letter from Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin delivered to President Ghulam Ishaq Khan by Russian Vice President Aleksandr Rutskoy in Islamabad today. In his letter, Boris Yeltsin expressed his sincere desire for promoting cooperation with Pakistan on a friendly and equitable basis. He said both countries will benefit from the opportunities created by the latest changes.

Expressing similar sentiments in response to this, President Ishaq Khan expressed the hope that the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries will open up new vistas of cooperation in all sectors. During the talks, the Afghanistan issue also was discussed, and both leaders emphasized the need for an immediate political solution acceptable to the Afghan people.

Meets With Zaki, Mojahedin Leaders

BK2212090991 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] Formal talks were held in Islamabad yesterday between Aleksandr Rutskoy, Russian Federation vice president, and Akram Zaki, secretary general of foreign affairs, in which matters on promoting bilateral relations in various fields were reviewed. Rutskoy emphasized the need for Pakistan to maintain the same level of relations that it had with the Soviet Union. At the same time, he said that a joint ministerial commission which should review the agreements for bilateral cooperation in different fields will set up. Akram Zaki said that Pakistan desires to establish ties with the Russian Federation in various sectors including the political, economic, scientific, and cultural fields.

The two sides agreed that both countries should cooperate to seek an early solution to the Afghanistan problem which is acceptable to the Afghan people. They also exchanged views on the situation in Kashmir and on nuclear nonproliferation in South Asia.

The Russian Federation's vice president held detailed discussions with various Afghan mojahedin groups on the five-point UN plan for the Afghan settlement and the release of prisoners of war. According to mojahedin sources, the focus of their discussion was the procedure for the transfer of power in Afghanistan, which is thought to be the basic element of the Afghan settlement.

The Afghan Interim Government [AIG] has agreed to release one prisoner of war as a gesture of goodwill. The POW is from the Central Asian republics. APP, quoting AIG sources, said that the name of the POW could not be learned immediately.

Criticizes Mojahedin on Nonreleases

BK2212160891 Hong Kong AFP in English 1435 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Excerpts] Islamabad, Dec 22 (AFP)—In a major shift from past relations Russia and Pakistan have agreed to work out new accords to develop wide-ranging bilateral cooperation, a joint communique said Sunday.

The communique, issued at a press conference addressed by Russian Vice President Aleksandr Rutskoy, said the two countries would also promote contacts between their defence establishments.

Before the press conference, which was held prior to his departure for Kabul after a three-day visit here, Rutskoy had a 30-minute meeting with Pakistani Army chief Asif Nawaz.

The communique said a joint commission would be set up to "reaffirm and review" existing Pakistani agreements with the former Soviet Union and to work out new ones. [passage omitted]

The agreements eclipsed the other aspect of Rutskoy's visit which was concerned with Afghanistan.

His talks with mojahedin leaders based in Pakistan on the release of Soviet prisoners of war captured during the near 10-year Soviet military occupation which ended in 1989 and a political settlement in Afghanistan were unproductive.

Rutskoy regretted that the resistance had not fulfilled its obligation to release Soviet prisoners of war made in a November 15 communique issued after talks in Moscow with the mojahedin.

Instead of taking along the prisoners "I am sitting here alone," he said.

One prisoner was eventually released later Sunday by moderate resistance leader Sebghatollah Mojaddedi.

Earlier a key resistance leader Golbuddin Hekmatyar whose Hezb-e Eslami faction is believed to be holding most of the prisoners brought a former Red Army commando with him to the Foreign Office.

But Nikolay Varadov, 29, from the Ukraine refused to accompany Rutskoy. The Islamic convert later said "I will go when the time comes."

Rutskoy also rejected the mojahedin demand to oust Afghan President Najibollah from power saying the era of imposing rulers was over.

"Russia is not going to do it," he told the news conference when asked if Moscow would remove Najibollah, a persistent resistance demand. "Afghanistan is an independent and sovereign state."

He said the Russian position was clear that it was up to the Afghan people to decide what president they should have.

"We have already passed the time when some countries were imposing dictators and presidents on other countries," he remarked.

He added Russia had stopped supplying military hardware to Kabul on December 15 on the basis of its commitment to the mojahedin delegation in Moscow last month.

Hekmatyar later told reporters that the mojahedin were not insisting on Najibollah's physical removal, or further military intervention by Moscow.

"At least they should admit that his (Najibollah's) government is illegitimate and that he must go and the rights of the people be restored," Hekmatyar stressed.

At the press conference Rutskoy stressed the need to resolve the Afghan problem on the basis of a May 21 United Nations proposals calling for intra-Afghan talks to install an interim administration pending elections.

The resistance have opposed any dialogue with Najibollah's party.

Both Burhanuddin Rabbani, who led the mojahedin delegation in Moscow, and Hekmatyar alleged that Moscow was still sending arms to Kabul.

Rutskoy is also scheduled to visit the Central Asian republics bordering Afghanistan amid mojahedin claims that arms to Kabul continued to arrive from there.

He told the press conference that on his return he would meet leaders of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenia "to know their position on the Afghan problem." [passage omitted]

Notes Lack of Progress on Afghanistan

BK2212095291 Hong Kong AFP in English 0910 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Excerpt] Islamabad, Dec 22 (AFP)—Russian Vice President Alexander Rutskoy indicated here Sunday his talks with Afghan mojahedin leaders failed to end a stalemate over the release of Soviet prisoners of war (POWs).

He also acknowledged a lack of progress towards an intra-Afghan dialogue as proposed by the United Nations to resolve the 13-year old Afghan conflict.

"I do not quite understand the position of the mojahedin," he told a press conference before his departure for Kabul after lengthy talks with the resistance leaders and the Pakistan Government.

He regretted the Afghan resistance's inability to fulfill their obligations regarding the release of Soviet POWs.

According to Russian sources, the mojahedin had furnished for the first time a list of about 55 prisoners, saying that 14 of them were alive.

Moderate resistance leader, Sebghatollah Mojaddedi, had announced here late Saturday the release of one prisoner, but a Pakistani diplomat doubted if he would be able to board Rutskoy's plane because of a delay in transportation.

Rutskoy stressed that intra-Afghan dialogue, proposed in the May 21 UN peace plan, provided the only "civilized method" to settle the war and bring peace to Afghanistan. [passage omitted]

Joint Communique Issued

BK2212113791 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] Pakistan and the Russian Federation have called for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia. This was stated in a joint communique issued in Islamabad today at the end of the four-day visit to Pakistan by the vice president of Russian Federation, Mr. Aleksandr V. Rutskoy.

In this context, the Russian vice president appreciated Pakistan's initiative and positively evaluated the proposal for a five-nation conference on nuclear nonproliferation in the region. Agreement was also reached for contacts between the foreign policy [as heard] and the defense establishments of the two sides through exchange of delegations and periodical consultations aimed at strengthening peace and stability in Asia and the world at large.

On Afghanistan, the two sides reiterated their firm commitment to a speedy political settlement of the problem and resolved to cooperate with each other for the promotion of this objective. Two sides emphasized the need for early voluntary return of the 5 million Afghan refugees living in Pakistan and Iran to their homeland in safety and honor.

The Pakistan side informed the Russian side about the deteriorating human rights conditions in Kashmir and about Pakistan's principled position on Jammu and Kashmir dispute.

On the Middle East, both sides welcomed the current peace negotiations and called for a solution in accordance with UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and for respect of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people.

Pakistan and Russian Federation also agreed to set up a joint commission to reaffirm and review their existing agreements and to work out new agreements.

Meets With Mojahedin; POW Deadlock Remains

LD2312090391 Kabul BAKHTAR in English 0510 GMT 23 Dec 91

[Text] [No place-name as received] Dec. 22, BAKHTAR—Aleksandr Rutskoy, vice-president of the Russian Federation has stated in Islamabad today that his talks with the Afghan mojahedin leaders in Islamabad, failed to remove the dead-lock on the release of the Soviet "POW's", report AGENCE FRANCE PRESS from Islamabad.

He stated that in relation to the start of an intra-Afghan dialogue proposed by the United Nations for the cessation of the 13-year long war in Afghanistan, no progress has taken place.

Besides, he during a press conference prior to his departure to Kabul and lengthy discussions with the leaders of oppositions and of Pakistani authorities remarked, he could not realized [as received] the position of the opposition leaders and regretted that the mojahedin leaders were unable to keep their promises on the release of the Soviet "POW's".

According to Russian sources, the mojahedin for the first time have prepared a list of 55 Soviet POW's and have claimed that out of which only 14 rpt 14 are alive. Sebghatollah Mojaddedi a moderate leader of the opposition on Saturday proclaimed the release of a Soviet POW's [as received] in Islamabad, but a Pakistani diplomat reported due to some transportation problem, he could not fly with Rutskoy.

He emphasised that the intra-Afghan dialogue stipulated in 21 May proposal of the United Nations is the only way of the termination of war and ensurance of peace in Afghanistan.

This plan is in favour of the establishment of a transitional administration in Kabul through an intra-Afghan dialogue, up to the holding of general elections in Afghanistan, stated Rutskoy.

Rutskoy added that the civilized method for opening a door is a key, but for opening of the door rocket should also be used.

He stressed that now this key is at the disposal of mojahedin.

Rutskoy while pointing out to the support of Russia, Pakistan, and Iran from the political solution of Afghan problem based on the UN plan, said that all the concerned sides ought to act jointly and adopt specific measures for a political and peaceful settlement of the Afghan issue.

Rutskoy in reply to a question in connection with the mojahedin insist on stepping down of President Najibollah from the helm of power, said that Russia will not interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

He added that in this regard, the stance of Russia is obvious which support the fact that the Afghan themselves should decide on their future.

Receives Fake POW From Mojahedin

BK2312103891 Hong Kong AFP in English 1036 GMT 23 Dec 91

[Text] Kabul, Dec 23 (AFP)—Mojahedin resistance fighters tricked Russian Vice President Alexander Rutskoy, handing him a man they claimed was a Soviet prisoner of war who turned out to be an Afghan, the Russians said here Monday.

"This is unacceptable ... this is ridiculous," said Rutskoy's principal aide Iona Andronod, as the so-called POW said he was never in the Soviet Army and that he was an Afghan.

"We came to know of the deception only here," Rutskoy said of the switch which was made Sunday in Islamabad, but absolved rebel leader Sebghatollah Mojadeddi of blame.

"It was a mistake," said an embarrassed Rutskoy of the switch which soured his visit, adding that the man was handed over at the last moment before his departure from Pakistan for Kabul.

"Mojadeddi handed over the Afghan national, Habibollah, just before my plane took off, saying he was a Soviet POW captured in 1990 in Afghanistan," he said.

"We checked later and found he was captured three years ago and that he came from (the northern Afghan city of) Mazar-e Sharif," the angry leader said at a news conference, adding that mojahedin loyalties to previous pledges were now suspect.

The rebels had agreed to release a first batch of Soviet POW's by the end of the year in exchange for a Moscow pledge to cut arms and combat fuel supplies to Kabul before New Year's day.

"In future we will be more careful," Rutskoy said, referring to possible future POW releases.

The Russian leader's week-long visit to Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan was primarily aimed at securing the release of Soviet POW's.

Afghan President Najibollah had during talks here agreed to release a large number of rebels held in Afghan prisons in exchange for Soviet POW's, Rutskoy told the press conference.

"The number of people released by Najibollah will be considerable," he said. He believed the "mistake" took place in Islamabad because certain vested interests wanted to sabotage Mojadeddi's efforts for a political settlement to the Afghan war.

"I want to go back to Pakistan ... I have no weapon and I don't want to fight my brothers," said Habibollah, the Afghan involved in the POW switch, speaking in the International Red Cross headquarters here, where the Russians left him after discovering his identity.

"We will try to help him with money and food to return home," Rutskoy said.